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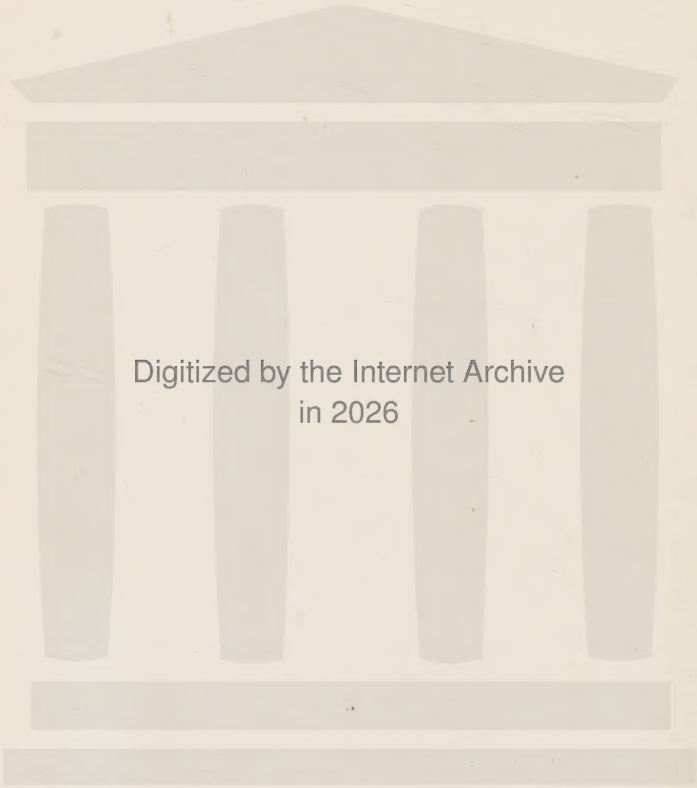
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THE THEATRE OF TOMORROW

THE THEATRE OF TOMORROW

KENNETH MACGOWAN

BONI AND LIVERIGHT
PUBLISHERS NEW YORK

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THE THEATRE OF TOMORROW

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To My Wife

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Part One

THE NEW STAGECRAFT

THE THEATRE OF TOMORROW

CHAPTER I.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY THEATRE.

THE thing that has been called the new movement in the theatre is a quarter of a century old. It has swept the playhouses of Germany and Russia, touched lightly the French and British stages, and in the last seven years risen to dominance in the serious theatre of America. It is not a simple thing—this stream of theory and effort. Its source is not found in any single mind. Its course is cut ceaselessly by cross-currents, and muddied by alien waters. As with most things so intensely human as the art of the theatre, close definition only confuses. It is complex with experiment and compromise. It goes back to the Greeks and on to a new theatre as different from ours of the nineteenth century as ours is different from the Greeks'. At the moment, I feel, it has completed only part of its work—the development of a technique of production, which we call the new stagecraft. In

doing this, it has hinted at a new sort of playhouse and a new (or a very old) relation of play and audience. It seems to me to be going on to the creation of a modern type of drama which will utilize the new technique and express the new relation.

No movement in the theatre has ever been simple enough for the purposes of the pigeonhole. Giants like Hugo and Ibsen may serve as expressions of the romantic and the realistic movements of the nineteenth century. But they have acquired stature through the passage of time, and about them in their own day stood playwrights, actors and producers now forgotten from whom and to whom impulse flowed in the web of contemporary effort. The new stagecraft has its giant—Gordon Craig—a giant who will grow greater in aspect as he and his contemporaries fade into the past. Yet it would be a reckless critic who would lay upon Craig alone the origination of a movement which sprang up in imperfect form at half a dozen points in Europe during the years before and after 1900.

As far back as 1808 a German critic, August Wilhelm Schlegel, gave an admirable summary of what was to be the theory of the new stagecraft, covering a surprising number of the points raised by Craig, Appia and the theorists and artists who followed them: "Our system of decoration was properly invented for the opera, to which in reality it is also best adapted. It has several unavoidable defects; others which may be,

but seldom are, avoided. Among the inevitable defects, I reckon the breaking of the lines in the side scenes from every point of view except one; the disproportion of the player when he appears in the background against objects diminished in perspective; the unfavorable lighting from below and behind; the contrast between the painted and the actual lights and shades; the impossibility of narrowing the stage at pleasure, so that the inside of a palace and a hut have the same length and breadth. The errors which may be avoided are want of simplicity and of great and reposeful masses; the overloading of the scene with superfluous and distracting objects, either because the painter is desirous of showing off his strength in perspective or because he does not know how otherwise to fill up the space; an architecture full of mannerism, often altogether unconnected, nay, even at variance with, possibility, colored in a motley manner which resembles no species of stone in the world."

Similar ideas motivated the attempts of Tieck and Immermann in 1840, and of Perfall and Savitts in 1890, to construct Shakespearean stages freed from all the folderol of scenic convention. In 1875 Godwin was designing and theorizing in admirable fashion upon stage settings for Shakespeare. In 1880 Anselm Feuerbach, the German painter, wrote: "I hate the modern theatre because my sharp eye always sees through the cardboard and the rouge. From the bottom of my soul

I hate the misdeeds committed in the name of decoration and everything that belongs thereto. It spoils the public, frightens away the last remnant of artistic feeling, and encourages barbarisms of taste, from which real art turns away and shakes the dust off its feet. The true work of art has enough power within itself to make its situations visible and real without unworthy artificial means, which violate all the canons of art. Unobtrusive suggestion is what is needed, not bewildering effects."

All these criticisms and efforts were vagrant anticipations of an art movement which was to find its first constructive theorist and practitioner in Adolphe Appia. In 1893 Appia published in French a brochure dealing with the setting of Wagner's operas. In the next few years he made sketches to illustrate his theories, and in 1899 he published, in German translation, his second and now classic volume, *Die Musik und die Inscenierung*. This book had an unquestioned effect in Germany, though Appia and his ideas are, even today, far less broadly known the world over than Craig's.

Gordon Craig—whose genius has been the greatest force in the theatre since Ibsen—played from 1889 to 1896 in the company of Henry Irving and Craig's mother, Ellen Terry. When he left Irving he turned to the study of stage management. With the exception of an experiment with a play by deMusset at Uxbridge, he

From The Theatre of Today.

KING LEAR—REINHARDT PRODUCTION

The first attempt of Reinhardt (1905) at applying extreme stylization to Shakespeare. The first scene of act one, as staged at the Deutsches Theater, Berlin, from the design by Czeschka.

attempted no productions until 1900. He gave no exhibitions of his designs until 1902. He published no connected account of his theories until 1905. Meanwhile William Poel worked ceaselessly upon his recreations of the Elizabethan stage and the re-introduction of Shakespeare properly arranged; and Henry Wilson, an instructor in art in London, designed and presented in *The Masque of Beauty* in 1899 a considerable share of the ideas and effects associated with the new stagecraft.

REINHARDT AT REHEARSAL

During these same late nineties Max Reinhardt, destined to become the most famous of modern *regisseurs,* was gradually deserting the theatre of Otto Brahm, arch-realist, and the Neue Freie Volksbühne for a type of vivid dramatic cabaret which he developed definitely between 1900 and 1901 in his *Schall und Rauch.* In the next few years he brought his more pungent and vigorous realism to a wedding with the newer ideas of Craig and Appia in his Kleines and Neues theatres and later in his Kammerspielhaus. By 1905 he was well launched upon the exploitation of the new methods of staging. With Reinhardt—himself an actor, director and manager—there developed a group of scenic de-

signers. In German theatres producers like Georg Fuchs and Paul Schlenther, artist-directors like Carl Hagemann and Max Martersteig, and designers like Ernst Stern, Julius V. Klein, Alfred Roller, Heinrich Leffler, Willy Wirk, Ludwig von Hofmann, Ludwig Sievert, Ottomar Starke, Karl Walser, Fritz Erler, Czeschka, Emil Orlik and Adolf Linnebach, paralleled the progress of Reinhardt.

In Russia when the Moscow Art Theatre was founded in 1898 by Stanislavsky and Nyemirovich-Dantchenko, the realistic movement fused to a certain extent with the impulse towards unity of production and completeness of emotional expression on the part of the actors, which is a necessary feature of the newer movement. Yet, for all the perfection of ensemble in the Art Theatre and the readiness to experiment with fresh methods, as shown in its production of *The Blue Bird* in 1908-09 and its invitation to Craig to produce *Hamlet* with his screen-settings in 1912, the Art Theatre owed its greater allegiance to realism. For that reason there departed from its ranks in 1906 a player and producer who was to contribute signally to the forefront of theory of the new "theatre theatrical"—Meyerhold.

In Paris, the home of Antoine, founder of the first "free theatre", the new stagecraft had only intermittent and hesitating interpreters until Jacques Rouché founded the Théâtre des Arts in 1907. Before him

FAUST AS SET BY REINHARDT

A sketch made by Robert E. Jones in Berlin in 1913, of setting and light as arranged by Ernst Stern, and the grouping of the actors by Max Reinhardt.

there was Rivière, Fort, Lugné-Poë; after him, the greatest of French *regisseurs* and a most uncompromising, fecund and creative force—Jacques Copeau.

These are the men who were creating the theory and the technique of the new stagecraft in the opening decade of the twentieth century and pushing it to completion in the years just before the war. They were working partly unknown to one another, partly in cooperation. What precisely were they working upon? What is the technique they evolved?

It is a technique that applies to realistic plays as well as to plays of spiritual emphasis, plays of color, imagination, exaltation, inner truth. It can create illusion as well as understanding. It can perfect the old theatre as well as launch the new. It does in fact range from a beautified realism to absolute, abstract form. Its one definite limit cuts it off from the theatre of photographic realism. It is always and utterly opposed to the copying upon the stage of the confusion and detail of actuality. Arthur Hopkins, the producer who has done most for the progress of the new stagecraft in the commercial American theatre, as Maurice Browne has done most for it in the world of the little theatre, effectively disposes of the photographic setting in his odd, lively and suggestive little book, *How's Your Second Act?*

"An attempt at exact reproduction challenges the . . . mind of the audience to comparison. . . . If a

Child's Restaurant in all its detail is offered, it remains for the audience to recall its memory photograph of a Child's Restaurant and check it up with what is shown on the stage. . . . The result of the whole mental comparing process is to impress upon the auditor that he is in a theatre witnessing a very accurate reproduction, *only remarkable because it is not real.* So the upshot of the realistic effort is further to emphasize the unreality of the whole attempt, setting, play, and all. So I submit that realism defeats the very thing to which it aspires. It emphasizes the faithfulness of unreality."

For a positive purpose the new stagecraft sets itself to visualize the atmosphere of a play. Its artists aim to make, in the settings called for by the text, an emotional envelope appropriate to the dramatic mood of the author, a visualization in color, line and light of the dominant emotions to be pictured by the actors.

Broadly speaking the artist achieves this through style. The playwright has his style, the artist must have his also. There is perhaps this difference: The playwright, choosing his subject, may retain a dominant style through all his plays, if only his temperament makes him choose unerringly the subjects suited to his style. The artist has the subject chosen for him —by the dramatist. To some extent he must play the chameleon. He must alter his own natural style of work to suit the play. Some artists can achieve the

Courtesy of Shadowland. KING LEAR—DESIGN BY NORMAN-BEL GEDDES

The clown's shelter on the heath; primitive England suggested in the druidical dolmen.

necessary effect of a fresh and appropriate style while retaining the general characteristics in color, line, or structure that are peculiar to him. Other artists—Norman-Bel Geddes is a notable example—recreate their own styles, develop an entirely new and distinctive technique for each fresh production. But in spite of a common personal style an artist may vary the method of its expression from production to production and even within a single production. Thus Joseph Urban—who has probably a more distinctive and fixed style than any other scenic designer in America—may practice an enriched and meaningful realism in *Le Prophète,* a decorative method in *Don Giovanni,* and abstraction in superficially realistic *Nju;* or he may run from realism to abstraction and symbolism in a single opera such as *St. Elizabeth.*

Within the limits of atmosphere and style, what are the methods of the new stagecraft? What are the artistic means appropriate to the theatrical problem? They are simplification, suggestion and synthesis.

Simplification is the test in almost all great art. Simplification of effect always; simplification of means generally. On the stage simplification of both effect and means are essential, because the scenery is not the only thing to be seen. Stage architecture is not architecture alone, or stage picture merely stage picture. The setting is the background of the actor. And it is essential that he shall be properly set off by his

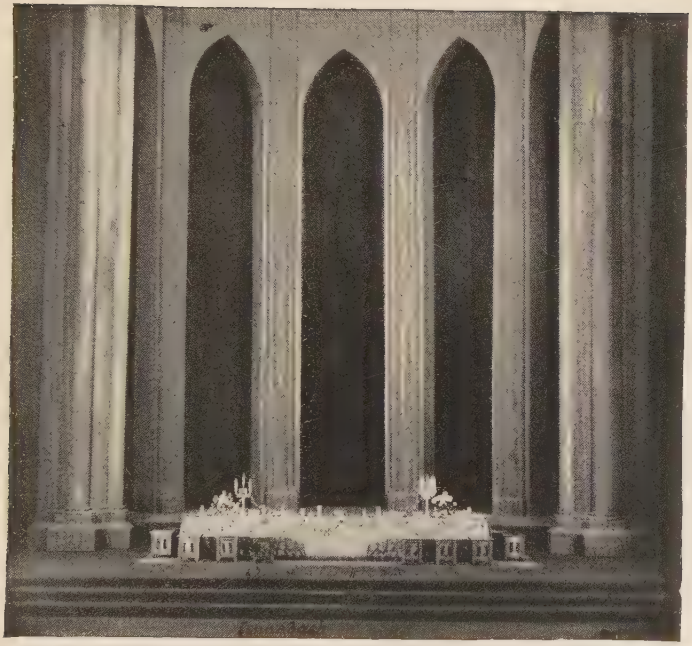
background and properly fused in it. He must mean more because of the setting, not less. The case against the old setting is that either its garishness or its detail tends to obscure the actor. On the stage we must have simplification for art's sake. But we must have

From Reinhardt und Seine Bühne

DANTONS TOD—SKETCH BY STERN
As produced by Reinhardt

it even more for the sake of the actor—and therefore of the play.

The complement to simplification is suggestion. Simplify as much as you please; you only make it the more possible to suggest a wealth of spiritual and æs-



From The Theatre of Today.

EVERYMAN—SETTING BY LINNEBACH

Through a simplified use of the Gothic, Adolf Linnebach suggests in his production at the Dresden Opera House both the religious atmosphere and the period of the old morality play.

thetic qualities. A single Saracenic arch can do more than a half dozen to summon the passionate background of Spanish *Don Juan*. One candlestick can carry the whole spirit of the baroque *La Tosca;* one Gothic pillar build the physical reality and the spiritual force of the church that looms above Marguerite. On the basis of simplification, the artist can build up by suggestion a host of effects that crude and elaborate reproduction would only thrust between the audience and the actor and the play. The artist can suggest either the naturalistic or the abstract, either reality or an idea and an emotion.

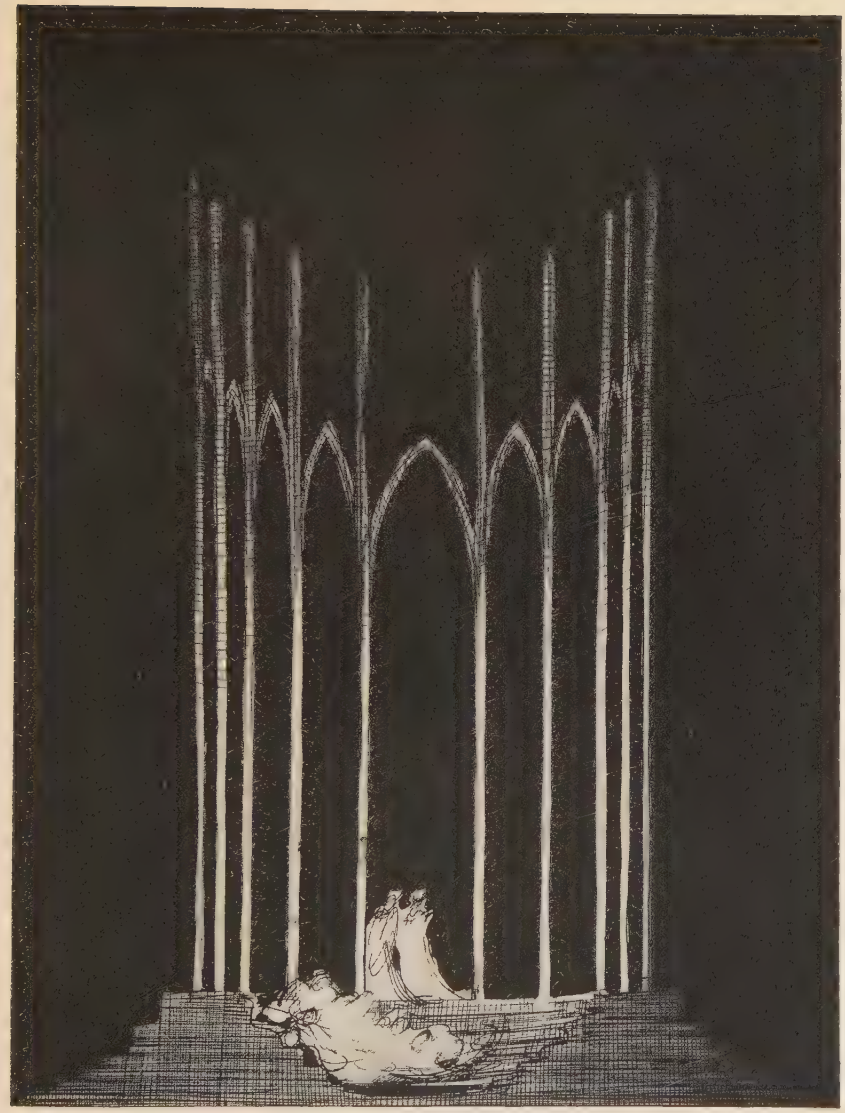
Finally, the dominant quality in modern stage production is synthesis. For modern stage art, in spite of all the easel artists who may care to practice the painting of backdrops and let it go at that, is a complex and rhythmic fusion of setting, lights, actors and play. There must be consistency in each of these, consistency of a single kind or consistency that has the quality of progression in it. And there must be such consistency among them all. Half the portrait, half the landscape, cannot be in Whistler's style and the other half in Zuloaga's. The creation of a mood expressive of the play is, after all, the final purpose in production. It can no more be a jumble of odds and ends than can the play itself.

The achievement of this synthesized suggestion of a play's simple, essential qualities has been sought by

the great theorists in very different ways. Gordon Craig would get it mainly by design, backed by color. Adolphe Appia fuses his drama in light. Jacques Copeau, whose beliefs and whose work must take a high place in the record of theatrical progress, achieves the play through restriction of means and the re-creation, at each production, of every element from the theatre building to the actor.

I think a single scene of a play produced by two Americans—and a modern, realistic play, at that—can be taken as an example of the working out of the three fundamentals in a fused whole. It is the opening scene of a failure produced by Arthur Hopkins a few years ago, *The Devil's Garden*. The opening of the play showed a postal clerk hauled up for examination on charges, in the room of a member of that bureaucracy, the British general post office. The setting was shallow, perhaps ten feet deep. At each end was a door set in a wall at right angles to the footlights. The rear wall was without opening, and its only decoration was a buff-toned map. Three chairs and one desk. And some actors. Simplification.

But that simple room fairly breathed bureaucracy, the thing that was about to grip the clerk. Its walls were a dull gray; its door casings, map frame, narrow wainscoting and furniture were black—the same gray and black of the morning clothes of the officials. These tones and these people made a well-composed



From The Theatre Arts Magazine.

THE SEVEN PRINCESSES—DESIGN BY JONES

The skeleton of a Gothic apse, with circular steps, shutting in the characters of Maeterlinck's play. Compare this abstract treatment of architectural form with the simplified but literal representation in Linnebach's *Everyman* opposite page 22.

harmonious picture, but it was a picture instinct with formality. The colors, the proportions, the map- all simple suggestions of the reality that ruled the whole great invisible building behind.

For synthesis, there was not only the consistency of this gray and black duotone and its restrained lighting. There was the handling of furniture and people —the stage direction; for while I shall talk a great deal of the artist and the picture because they are new to the stage, it must always be remembered that only through the direction can play, actors, settings and lights be properly fused. The desk and chairs were precisely and formally square with the square walls. The people entered from the end doors, moved squarely and formally up to each other, face to face, precise. It was a machine, the machine of government property. That scene, as designed by Robert E. Jones and directed by Arthur Hopkins, was a perfect piece of realism, and a perfect piece of abstraction besides. It showed the possibilities of the new art for the drama of today as well as for the more significant, spiritual, colorful type of play for which so many of us are hoping and of which the new stagecraft and its potentialities seem a portent.

Unquestionably the purpose of the immense fresh effort which has thus poured into the theatre in these twenty-five years is not the perfecting of plays like *The Devil's Garden.* Three signs forbid this: First,

the new stagecraft always achieves its most moving success in plays of another sort, in *The Jest* as staged by Robert E. Jones and Arthur Hopkins, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as staged by Ernst Stern and Max Reinhardt or by Norman Wilkinson and Granville Barker, in *The Blue Bird* as staged by V. E. Yegoroff and Stanislavsky. Second, the greatest of the artists tend steadily toward more abstraction in their settings, toward those distinctive qualities of the modern art movement which fuse in "expressionism;" you may see this in Craig's *Hamlet* done with screens at the Moscow Art Theatre, in Jones's *Macbeth.* Third, artists and directors alike turn more and more toward the problem of the physical playhouse, toward reforms in proscenium, forestage and setting, which make for a wholly new relation of audience and play, and which demand a type of drama fitted, like the drama of the Greeks, of Shakespeare, of Molière, for presentation upon a stage where illusion is not so important as emotional intimacy, directness, clarity.

It is the purpose of these pages to set forth the ideas behind the new stagecraft, the reforms in the physical playhouse and the changes in contemporary plays which all point, as I see it, towards a new drama, and to attempt to outline that drama in its broader aspects.

CHAPTER II.

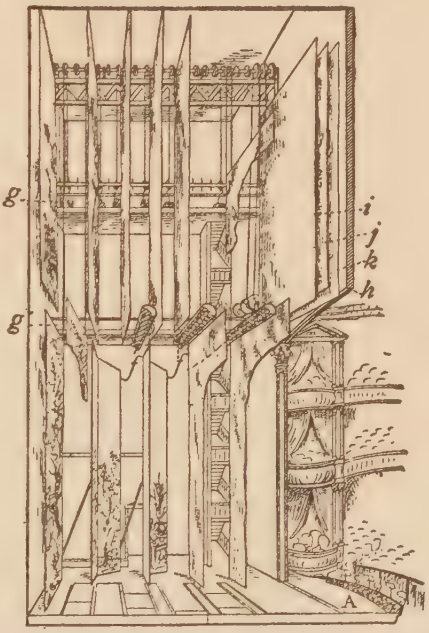
THE MECHANICIAN.

ACROSS some twenty centuries one factor connects Æschylus with *The Follies of 1918*. It is not the actors, not the music, not the spoken word, not even the chorus. It is one of the humbler partners in theatrical production, the mechanician. When the moment came to shift the scenes of Ziegfeld's miscellaneous revue, the stage-hands grasped the edges of six or eight huge, triangular prisms of canvas standing in lines down the sides of the stage, and revolved them a third of a turn, thus presenting to the view of the audience, when the front curtain rose, a new side of each with a new decoration upon it. When it was necessary for the drama of *The Eumenides* to shift from the temple at Delphi to the temple at Athens, certain functionaries of the theatre of Dionysus in Athens turned just such prisms before the birth of Christ. There were two of these curious objects—the *periaktoi*—one at each side of what we must call the stage. On their various sides were painted symbolic indications of the settings. A wave-line indicated the sea shore; an appropriate device, the city of Athens. The means was roughly the same as

in the work of the artists of our own new stagecraft —a simplified suggestion of place or atmosphere. Martin Harvey, the English actor who brought a Reinhardtian production of *Œdipus Rex* to Covent Garden, London, before the war, utilized two such *periaktoi* in his production of *The Taming of the Shrew,* each large enough to make all the setting required at the side of the stage, when combined with an appropriate backdrop. When he designed *The Follies of 1918* Joseph Urban used three or four narrower *periaktoi* at each side, in addition to his backdrops. In all three cases the ingenuity of the mechanician was at the bottom of the scenic effect, yet it was an ingenuity and a mechanism peculiarly appropriate to an artistic solution of one of the biggest of scenic problems—quick changes of scene.

This problem has united the stage mechanic very closely with the artist of the new stagecraft. The whole history of the theatre is filled with examples of machines for creating this or that effect—the *deus ex machina* of the Greeks, bearing a confession of the mechanical in the very name; the Hell Mouth of the mediæval stage; the devices of Inigo Jones in his Stuart masques; the traps of the eighteenth century stage; the hydraulic bridges and the "Asphaleïa" jacks that raised sections of the stage in Victorian days—but the mechanical reforms of the past twenty-five years in the German theatre have had to do almost altogether

with giving the artist greater freedom in playing upon the emotions of the audiences through rapid changes of scene. In the days when Craig, Appia, Fuchs and Reinhardt were working upon the reform of the setting, the mechanicians of the German theatre were busy with the invention of devices to shift settings mechanically. The impulse had come primarily from the realistic theatre. Before audiences demanded reality upon the stage, the problem of shifting scenery was comparatively simple. Both interiors and exteriors prior to 1850 were made up of backdrops, borders above and light canvas wings



This cut, from *The Century Dictionary,* is intended to take the place of a glossary and to make clear technical terms used in this and succeeding chapters. A is the apron, which may become the forestage; *f, f,* border lights; *g, g,* fly-galleries; *h,* proscenium arch; *i, j,* curtains; *k,* asbestos fire-proof curtain. The backdrop is the last piece of scenery to the left; in front of it stand flats in the wings. The proscenium includes the pillar by the boxes as well as the arch.

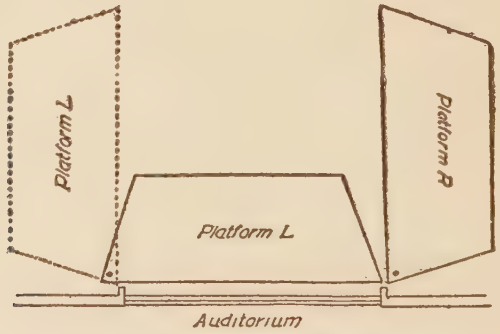
thrust out from each side parallel to the footlights. Rooms did not have side walls; they had something that might better be described as screens between which the actors made their exits. Back drops, borders and wings could be moved quickly, either "flied" (raised by ropes to the gridiron above), slid back in grooves, or moved aside bodily. With the coming of straight side walls which could neither be flied nor slid in grooves, of ceilings in place of borders, and particularly of real wooden doors, mantelpieces and even wainscoatings, shifting settings required the labor of a large corps of stage hands. The mechanicians then began working on the problem of how to make these changes more quickly by eliminating as much hand labor as possible. They solved the problem in time to serve the ends of the new artist. Their devices are of first-rate importance because they give the artist greater freedom to build solidly and honestly, because through quick changes they permit the director to play more effectively on the emotions of the audience by flinging scene after scene upon them with only one rather long intermission for relaxation, and because many of the devices give the settings themselves a curious and interesting unity.

America has contributed very little to the solution of this mechanical problem. The strange and fertile genius of Steele MacKaye, the father of Percy MacKaye, the playwright, worked upon it. His first so-

lution was the "drop stage" or "elevator stage" installed in the old Madison Square Theatre when it was built in 1884 and modeled, it is said, on a device used by Booth ten years before. This consisted of two floors or stages, one above the other. While one stage was at the level of the proscenium opening, the other, either above or below, could be reset for the next scene. Elaborate and powerful machinery raised or lowered this gigantic double-decked elevator. Like most devices for making changes of scene without the use of the gridiron, it made little way in America because scenery built to meet its requirements could not be handled comfortably in other theatres; this interfered with road tours. For his projected Spectatorium at the World's Fair in Chicago MacKaye devised a much more intricate stage to produce panoramic changes of scene as well as water spectacles. Along concentric tracks circling out from the centre of the proscenium opening, sections of the stage were to move on trucks. Another device of MacKaye's, adapted from European models, provided "chariots" or trucks below the stage floor, which was so slotted that masts fastened to the chariots and carrying pieces of scenery could be slid back and forth at will.

America's next contribution was the swinging stage, first introduced, I believe, by Arthur Hopkins and Joseph Wickes for *On Trial* in 1916, and used again the same year by Joseph Urban in his production of

Twelfth Night for Phyllis Neilson-Terry. In the case of *Twelfth Night,* the swinging stage was installed to make changes in rather small settings behind an inner proscenium which stood throughout the play. In *On Trial* the swinging stage filled the whole normal proscenium opening. The principle is simple, and the device does not interfere with touring, since the two



THE SWINGING STAGE

As introduced by Arthur Hopkins in *On Trial.* While the setting on one platform is in view, the other platform is being re-set in the wings and made ready to take its place.

platforms needed may be packed and carried about. These platforms are a little larger than the sets to be used. The left front corner of one is pivoted behind the left base of the proscenium arch; the right front corner of the other behind the right base. While one of these platforms is in place before the curtain, the other is swung into the wings and the scene changed. They move on rollers upon concentric metal tracks laid on the floor. In *On Trial* their use

was most successful and most necessary, since the play required the scene to shift rapidly from a court room to the spots where the incidents that the witness was describing had occurred.

The German theatre is responsible for the perfecting of practically all the other methods of quick scene-shifting now in use, and in Germany they find their fullest employment. One of the most curious, because it alters the position of the settings as we are used to them on the stage, is in use at the Werkbund Theater in Cologne designed by van de Velde. The plan is to divide the stage opening into three sections and to use only one section at a time. The line of the footlights and the edge of the stage, instead of being straight or convex as in practically all theatres, curves inward and away from the audience. A curtain of the general color of the walls is arranged to cover whatever sections of the stage are not to be visible, and is designed to seem a continuation of the house itself. Thus, as Oliver M. Sayler describes it, for the first scenes in *Faust* the curtain covers the right two-thirds of the proscenium opening while in the left third Faust's study is visible. For the next scene, the third at the right is used, with the curtain covering the rest of the opening. After another view of the study, the whole stage is utilized for an exterior as it would normally be, with the wall of a building hastily set across the front of the study. The obvious defect of

this method would seem to be that the audience have to twist about in their seats or at least turn their attention in a new direction at each change of scene. Casual witnesses such as Sayler, however, have found this readjustment easy to make.

Sayler describes in *The Russian Theatre Under the Revolution* another device which also utilizes only part of the stage at a time. It is in use at the Studio Theatres connected with the Moscow Art Theatre. It consists of a curtain running on a horizontal pole pivoted near the back of the stage. As it is swung to the right or the left it conceals or discloses one side or the other of the stage. While the setting on one side is hidden, it is quietly changed, and the back of the curtain itself ornamented with some applied device. When the curtain is swung across to the other side a new scene is disclosed.

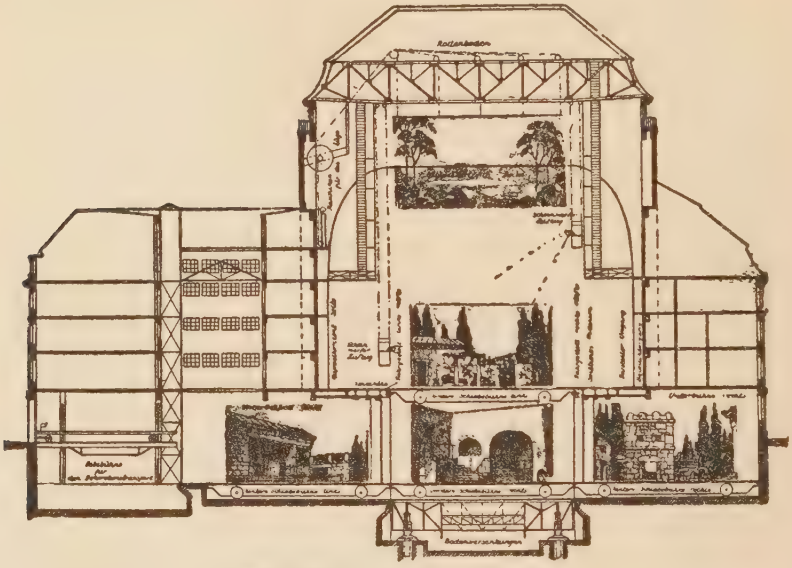
In the American theatre changes of scene have sometimes been made by lighting up one part of the stage while keeping another in darkness. Thus in *Crooked Gamblers* under the direction of Robert Milton, a director trained in Moscow, rooms on two floors of an office building were shown in rapid succession by erecting the whole structure on the stage and switching off the lights on one floor as the lights came on upon another.

The German theatre has made extensive use of three mechanical devices described in Hiram K. Moder-

well's *Theatre of Today*—the sliding stage, the revolving stage and the wagon stage. The sliding stage, invented by Fritz Brandt of the Royal Opera, Berlin, is practically the elevator stage of MacKaye worked sidewise. The acting floor is on rollers and is drawn out to one side while a similar section, already set, is wheeled into its place. For convenience the stage is sometimes divided into two or three sections parallel to the footlights. Any one or all three may be slid out at pleasure. The disadvantage of the sliding stage is that it requires on each side of the stage proper a section of clear floor as large as that behind the proscenium opening. This is hardly available when theatres are built in districts of high rent. Adolf Linnebach, the talented technical director of the new Königliches Schauspielhaus of Dresden (as it was called in 1914) obviated part of the difficulty by using hydraulic jacks to raise and lower the floor of the stage upon which the platforms rested. Thus, as Moderwell puts it, the stage "does its sliding in the basement," where there is ample room. An added advantage of this arrangement is that the three longitudinal sections of the stage can be raised easily to different heights for terraces, balconies, etc.

Another, a simpler and a cheaper equipment for scene shifting is the wagon stage. This consists of a group of a dozen or more small platforms about six feet by twelve mounted on wheels and sometimes self-

propelled. The scenery is merely fastened against the edges of these wagons, with the bottom of the "flats" just clearing the floor. Two or more wagons may be lashed together to carry larger sections of the setting

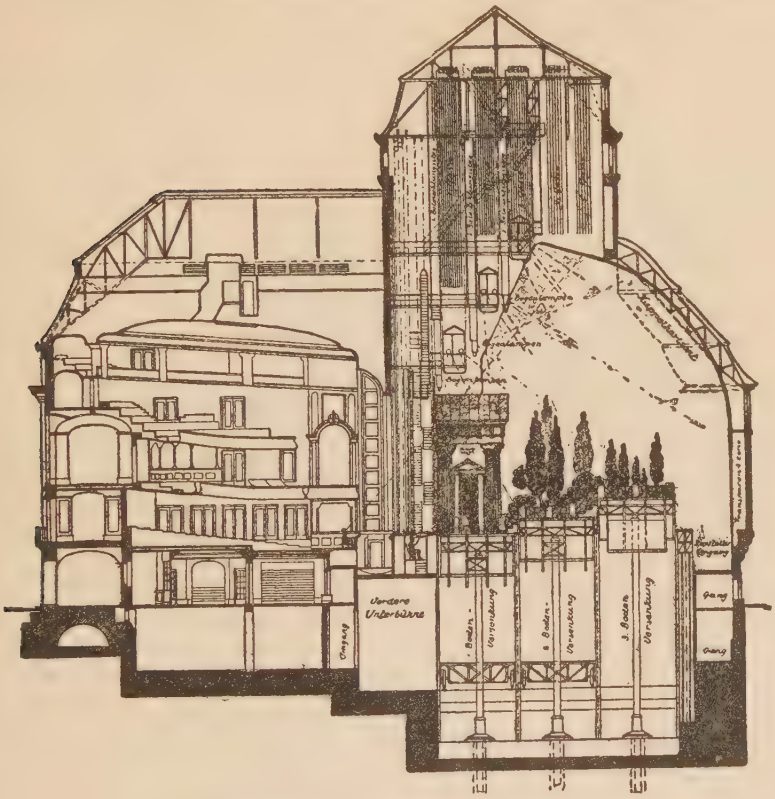


THE SLIDING AND SINKING STAGE

A section through the former Königliches Schauspielhaus in Dresden. The drawing shows at the top a backdrop suspended from the gridiron in the ordinary fashion. In the basement are three other settings waiting for the stage to be lowered, the used scene slid off, and one of the three moved into its place, and raised to the stage level, occupied in the drawing by an exterior setting. The front edge of the dome is indicated by the curving line.

or heavy platforms or staircases. These wagons simply take the place of stage hands in moving the walls of settings into place. In America, when Charles Klein introduced solid wooden settings, the sections of the walls were so arranged that they would tip back

onto casters; and thus they carried with them, so to speak, their own wagons. The German wagons can

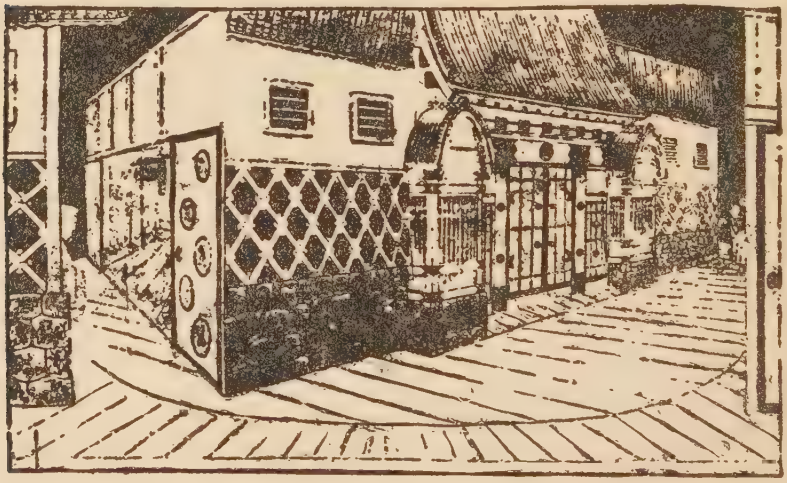


THE SLIDING AND SINKING STAGE

A section through the Königliches Schauspielhaus showing the three lengthwise divisions of the stage raised to different levels to represent terraces.

be used upon an ordinary stage, upon the sliding stage in order to facilitate the resetting of the section in the wings, or upon the much more celebrated revolving stage.

The revolving stage was perfected by Karl Lautenschläger, and introduced first in 1896 at the Residenz Theater in Munich. *Play Production in America,* by Arthur Edwin Krows, is authority for the statement that it was "known prior to 1880 in a French playhouse." It first came to America at the Liberty



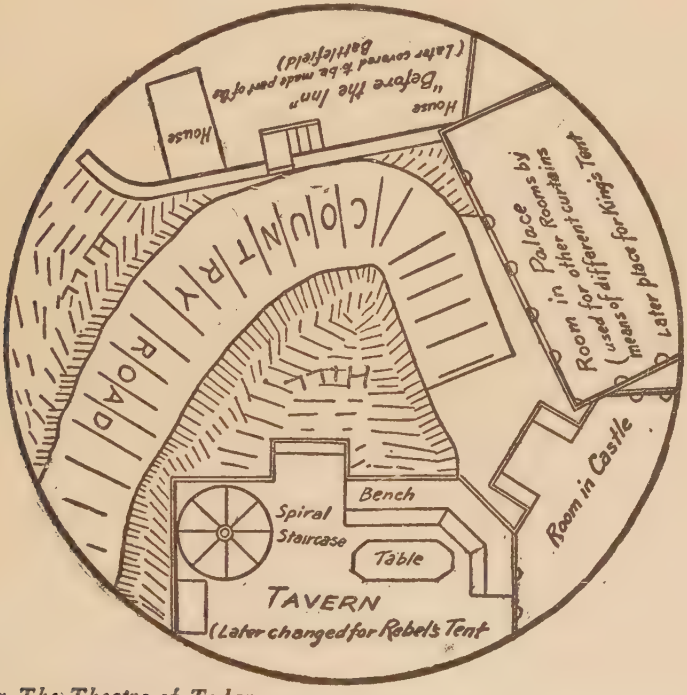
From Scribner's Magazine

THE JAPANESE REVOLVING STAGE

The original from which Lautenschläger adapted this scene-shifting device in 1896. The stage is shown while turning. The curtain does not descend.

Theatre, Oakland, Cal., where it was introduced by Harry Bishop. Winthrop Ames, who had made an extensive study of European stages, installed a revolving stage at the New Theatre in 1911 and at his Little Theatre built later. In the two New York houses the device has been little used of late years, largely because

settings have to be built to tour, not to suit a single peculiar stage-device. To get the most out of a revolving stage, its scenery should be especially designed to utilize its peculiar advantages.



From The Theatre of Today

THE REVOLVING STAGE SET FOR HENRY IV, PART I

The stage of Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater as arranged for the first part of Shakespeare's chronicle play. As the stage is turned, the five settings are successively presented to view.

The German revolving stage finds its original in Japan where it has been in use for years. As adapted to European conditions it consists of a great circle of

the stage surface, considerably wider than the proscenium opening, cut out and so pivoted or supported as to turn freely. Upon this circle the various scenes are set practically back to back. Two to five or six settings can be accommodated, some large, some small. They occupy, as it were, the segments of a pie. First one setting is presented to the proscenium, then the stage is slowly revolved until the next setting comes opposite the opening. While one set is being used, others may be altered or cleared away. The cut on page 39 illustrates how the circle is divided and the cut on page 41 how the settings are built up.

The building up of the settings contains both advantages and disadvantages for the revolving stage. Obviously so long as it is used for setting a number of scenes a clear stage for any one of them is impossible. So long as there must be a room waiting on the rear part of the circle there cannot be an exterior scene showing a level view of the horizon. In theatres such as Reinhardt's using the revolving stage, exterior scenes are built up from the line of the footlights over the top of the other settings. Otherwise, for exteriors or very large interiors, the revolving stage must cease to revolve and be treated as an ordinary stage floor.

Aside from swift changes of scene, the advantages of the revolving stage lie in the relations of the various settings built upon it. The hilly exteriors, which would be costly to build if they were not supported by

From Reinhardt und Seine Bühne

THE REVOLVING STAGE IN ACTION

Six sketches by Ernst Stern showing the process of building up the scenery upon the revolving stage until five or six scenes are ready for presentation upon the turning of the great disk on which they rest. In the last sketch we look through the proscenium frame.

other settings, are obviously interesting. Moreover, in the dovetailing of the various rooms and houses, which are clamped together on a steel frame, a certain unity is produced. One room may be made to lead out of another, or a court-yard from a street. Indeed Reinhardt occasionally turns his stage in full view of the audience, after the Japanese manner, and permits his actors to walk from one setting into the next, from the street before Capulet's house, for instance, into Juliet's garden.

Other devices for eliminating long waits have been developed by the new artists and *regisseurs* as inherent parts of the design of their productions. These are even more interesting than the inventions of the mechanics, and frequently point ahead to a new conception of the playhouse as a place not seeking realistic illusion but formal beauty. Perhaps I should say a very old conception, for these devices frequently recall the stage of Shakespeare. The simplest is practically Elizabethan. It is the revival of the forestage. The apron is extended out or down towards the audience. On each side are permanent portals or new proscениums with openings. Back of these, perhaps about where our present curtain line comes, is a new picture frame closed by hangings. These hangings with a few properties may present a scene on the forestage. The curtains can be drawn apart disclosing a deeper stage with other furniture, or an exterior. This form

THE CLOISTER—A SKELETON SETTING

Sheldon K. Vielé's arrangement of scenes for Verhaeren's play, as produced by the New York Theatre Guild. The arches remain in place throughout.

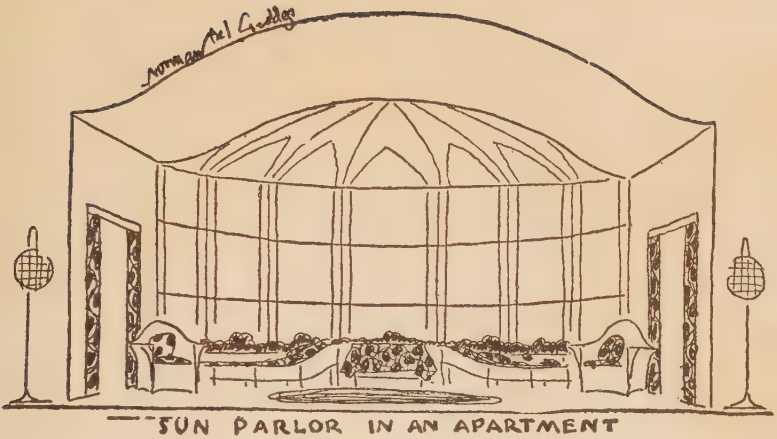
of stage has been used much for Shakespearean productions in Germany, where theatres have been built or rebuilt for the purpose. The plan has been applied to older theatres and to our own playhouses by installing an inner proscenium six to ten feet back of the footlights and treating this area as the forestage. Urban's *Twelfth Night* added its swinging stage to this device. Granville Barker built a forestage into Wallack's Theatre during his season in 1914-15 and used the first boxes for entrances or portals.

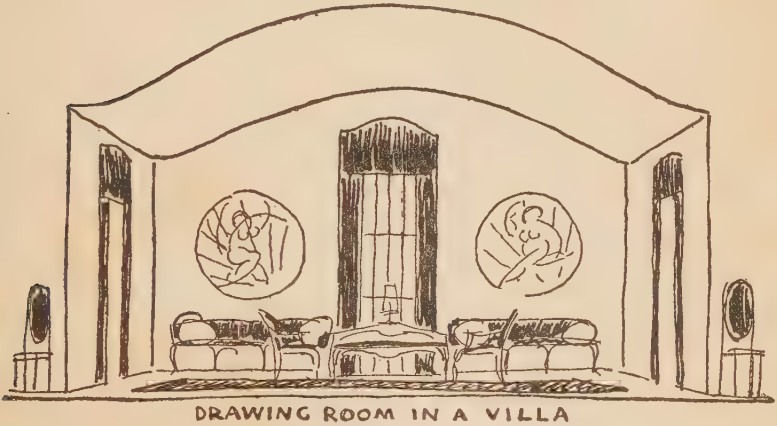
Somewhat related to such an arrangement are the permanent settings and the skeleton settings so often utilized both here and abroad. The permanent setting is some sort of equipment of columns, pilons, arches and draperies rearranged quickly and easily for various scenes and utilized, over and over again, by Sam Hume at the Arts and Crafts Theatre, for various productions. It is perhaps the slowest of the methods of making changes of settings here described, as well as the cheapest. The skeleton setting implies carrying through all the scenes of any play a general structure that is only altered in minor particulars. Thus in *The Cloister,* as staged by Sheldon K. Vielé for the New York Theatre Guild, a row of Gothic arches stood through the whole play. With a background of monastery wall, it served for the first act of Verhaeren's play. For the chapter house, a different backdrop was added, as well as a chair and benches; for the chapel,

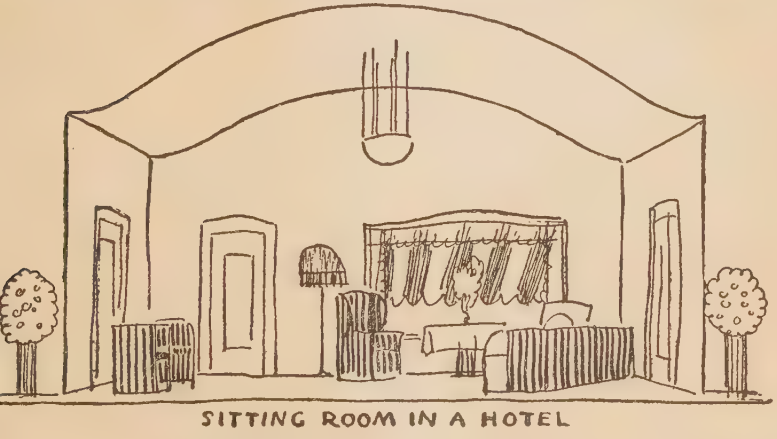
From The Theatre Arts Magazine.

TWELFTH NIGHT—URBAN'S SHAKESPEARE SETTING

Two sketches for *Twelfth Night* as produced by George C. Tyler in 1915, with side portals and an inner proscenium, within which settings were changed by means of the swinging stage.







PAPA—DESIGNS BY NORMAN-BEL GEDDES

Permanent side walls and arched ceiling remain throughout the play. The three different settings are secured economically and illusively by changes in the back walls and the furniture.

an altar, a grating and benches sufficed to make a new scene. The unity of such a treatment is valuable, and the ingenuity of the artist in handling his problem increases the æsthetic pleasure. Hume derived his permanent setting from a more elaborate and imaginative scheme for the use of folding screens of all widths and heights devised by Gordon Craig and utilized by him in his production of *Hamlet* at the Moscow Art Theatre.

In these schemes of the artists for simplifying the problem of changes of set and permitting the easy production of plays with many scenes, there is the implication of a new physical playhouse and a new way of looking at the problems of production. Realism is at a discount; the convention of the fourth wall is discarded; the picture frame proscenium ignored. The audience is put into a new relation with the players and the play, an intimate and a truly *theatrical* relation. All this in very obvious transition towards a new playhouse built for a style of production utterly unrealistic, quite apart from representation or illusion. Such methods as Craig's and Hume's imply also a movement towards expressionism, towards a use of abstract shapes and non-representative objects and design to express mood and atmosphere. We pass from the problems of the mechanic to the problems of the artist.

CHAPTER III.

THE ELECTRICIAN.

LIGHT is the heart of the stage picture. In the hands of the artist it is more important than the brush. Light can make drama in a void. And light has been the last discovery of our theatre.

In *The Theatre of Today* Hiram K. Moderwell has admirably sensed and expressed the importance of light and the reason for its importance. "There is a living principle in lighting," he says, "second only to that of the actor himself." Fundamentally, I feel, it is akin to the power that turned primitive man to sun-worship; light fructifies the stage as the sun fructifies nature. There may be a spiritual quality in the line of a column or the pose of an actor's body; there is always a spiritual quality in light, even when it is only illumination. Moderwell got close to the basic appeal of light in the playhouse when he wrote:

"Put a man in a dark room and make him fix his gaze for a certain length of time on a bright spot and you centre his attention to a focal point, deadening the merely logical factors of his brain and sensitizing him many times over to sensuous impressions—a state of

partial hypnosis. Now these, within certain limits, are exactly the conditions of the theatre—a spectator in a dark room looking at a bright spot. And a state of partial hypnosis, at least to the extent of deadening the logical faculties and heightening the sensuous ones, is precisely that desirable for the complete reception of a work of art."

It is also, unfortunately, the state for the reception of a work of specious art—at least, until the subject of this hypnosis becomes a little more accustomed to the arts of the stage electrician than he is at present. Actors and plays beautifully lighted can take on an extraordinarily deceptive quality. I have been conscious of enjoying performances and plays of most uneven merit when they were dramatized with the sculptural and atmospheric lighting of the new stagecraft.

Progress in lighting has been so rapid, even on Broadway, that we are apt to forget how amazingly bad it was once. Praising the beauty of the German stage in 1913, and finding in the lighting the soul of its beauty, Moderwell wrote: "It seems to an American imagination impossible that a stage should be other than glaring white." Today it seems to an American imagination impossible that our stage lighting was ever glaring white. Yet until the season of 1914-15, when David Belasco eliminated the footlights from his Belasco theatre, and introduced in place of the old border lights the thousand-watt filament lamps,

with the x-ray reflectors, how flat and bare and tasteless even the best of our lighting was.

Picture a production of those days. A backdrop, or at best a rather shallow and wrinkled cyclorama, sharply bright towards its upper edge, where the last row of border lights hung, and glowing in feverish spots at each side where the floods or bunches stood; right and left, wings similarly lighted; above, three parallel rows of flapping canvas borders, simulating the sky or perhaps the branches of a peculiar variety of tree which grows in this well-trained fashion from one side of the stage to the other, and lit more brightly than wings or backdrop by the border lights, those hideous footlights of air; finally the footlights proper glaring up in pitiless, shadowless brilliance upon the under side of tables and the actors' chins. Not a shadow in the whole picture, unless it was the shadow of a table cast upwards by the footlights in some darker room.

Here in the province of the electrician we can at least thank American genius for liberation from ugliness and stupidity. Certain European devices—the Fortuny system of indirect lighting, particularly the domed plaster sky which sprang from it, and the Ars system of cyclorama and lights—have peculiar advantages which we have only begun to sense. But our own employment of the high-powered incandescent bulb in place of arc lights and of rows of small incandescents has accomplished much for beauty.

For a considerable time the battle was all against the footlights. Even as far back as 1785 we may read of the sins of that trough of brilliance which seventeenth century actors devised as the only possible method of getting their weak candles and oil lamps near enough to light their faces. The footlights must be abolished: that was about the only recipe for bettering the lighting of our stage. Nobody who wrote of the problem remembered the "footlights overhead," the inverted troughs of small lamps that made ceilings brighter than floors and joined with the foots in giving the actor's features about the definition and distinction of a well-filled bag of flour. Some were all for putting out the footlights and substituting "baby" spot-lights and arcs projected from the front of the house. A few pleaded that just a little light from the floor might be needed to soften shadows from above and create a touch of the diffusion of sunlight. But, in general, the footlights must go.

Rather suddenly it was discovered that the footlights of the air were going instead. David Belasco, who has been the pioneer of electrical progress in our theatre, had made a production without footlights in 1879 when he staged Morse's *Passion Play* in San Francisco. He did without them in several productions at the old Madison Square Theatre, and he did not use them, according to his own statement, in either *The Darling of the Gods* in 1902-03 or *Adrea* in 1904-05. When

he decided to eliminate the foots altogether from the Belasco theatre in the fall of 1914, he made a far more important contribution to stage lighting in the devices he installed to replace them. He hung a row of ten or a dozen large incandescent lamps in skilful hoods and reflectors in place of the first or "concert" border just behind the proscenium opening, and also in a special hood which he built out still further forward above the apron. These he supplemented with "baby spots" or small movable lights with lenses, which he first used, I think, in *Nobody's Widow* in 1908-09, to follow the actors about the stage unknown to the audience. The large incandescents instead of small border lights were soon adopted by Arthur Hopkins and Robert E. Jones and have been used by them and an increasing number of producers ever since.

These overhead lamps threw a pool of lovely illumination upon the floor of the stage. The light seemed to come from nowhere in particular. It left the ceiling only reflected light, and gave the walls of the rooms a chance to retire with becoming modesty in favor of the actors. Upon the faces of the players it wrought something approaching a miracle. It gave their features definition, it brought out with sculptural sharpness the natural contours and lines of the face. And the great importance of this was that the actor uses his features to express emotion, and that the significance of features moving in light and shadow is far more clearly

visible than when a blank glare has ironed out every wrinkle of the forehead, every twist of the lip, every depth of the eye-sockets. By such lighting, sculpture replaced the picture on the American stage. The x-ray borders have not entirely solved the problem: not of lighting more naturally than from below, but of lighting so naturally that there are shadows upon the stage. They are often used recklessly and inartistically. They need supplementing and toning down, and here Belasco has shown an admirable example in the lights which he installed in the front of the balcony in 1917. This is happier than the lights from overhead in the auditorium, with which Winthrop Ames, Maude Adams and Joseph Urban have experimented. It is a great improvement on the six or eight hooded lights which Granville Barker placed along the balcony of Wallack's in 1915 as a substitute for footlights. The Belasco battery is masked battery; hardly one spectator in a hundred can or does see them, for during the intermissions they are hidden by little doors that swing open automatically when the lights are to be used.

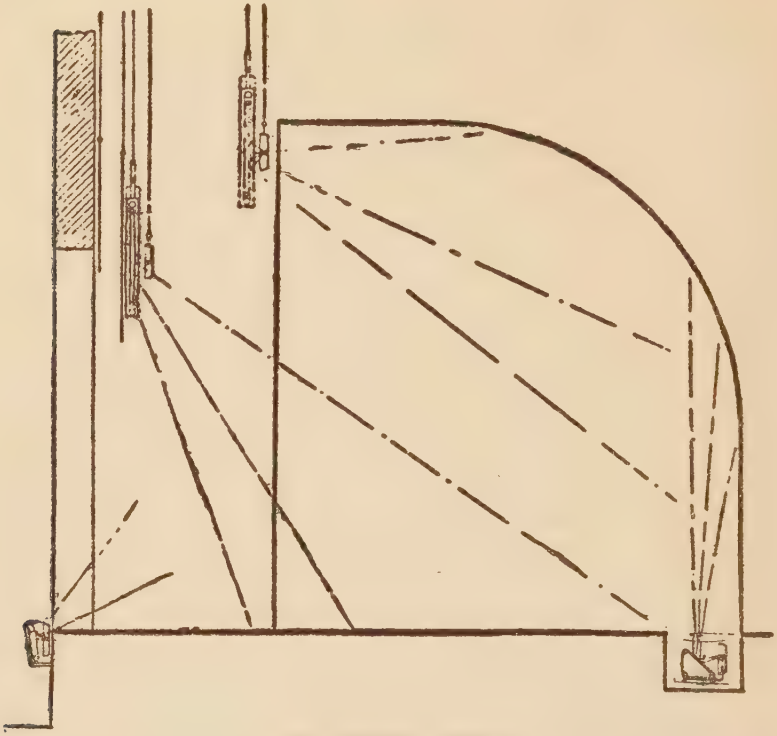
Light coming from one or two sources, casting softened shadows and emphasizing the actors instead of the background or the ceiling, has transformed American production. When the settings are still old-fashioned and ugly, as in more than half our plays, the light does a great deal to bring dramatic beauty into the

theatre. There is still much to be done, however, in solving problems of color and particularly of supplying a better substitute for the sky. There we may learn something from Europe.

A few years ago colored light was generally obtained by dipping the small incandescent bulbs in dye—an unsatisfactory method because of the uncertain color and intensity of the dyes and the rapidity with which they faded in use. With the coming of the larger incandescents, the system of filtering the white light through colored mediums of gelatine or glass, employed with spot lights, came into wider and wider use. With the lights overhead, however, it was manifestly impossible to change these mediums by hand. The substitute was to use three or four times as many light-units as were needed, and to place before each a permanent medium in one of the three desired colors. By turning off some lamps and turning on others colored lights of various shades could thus be obtained. The difficulties of this are considerable. Only very accurate and permanent primary colors will make this system perfect. Such colors are hard to obtain in America, in spite of much research by men like Munroe R. Pevear, of Boston, who has also devised, but not yet commercialized, special lamps and lenses of considerable ingenuity.

The problem of securing accurate colors and easy changes in hue, linked with the problem of producing

natural and diffused light from one or two sources, led to the perfection in Germany of some extremely



THE FORTUNY SYSTEM

The light from the smaller suspended boxes falls upon colored silk bands in the larger boxes to the left and is reflected back upon the plaster sky-dome in a diffused illumination. A stationary unit replaces the foot-lights, and another similar apparatus is located in a pit at the base of the dome.

ingenious devices. They may be generally classified under the name of the Fortuny system of lighting, though improvements in the two elements of this sys-

tem, the lights and the background, have gone beyond and to a considerable extent away from Fortuny's principles.

The ideas of this Venetian were worked out through the coöperation of the General Electric Company in Berlin during the first decade of the twentieth century. They consist of two elements: first, the source of the light, a unit which throws white light upon colored silk, from which it is reflected upon the stage; and, second, the surface upon which this light finally falls and from which it is again reflected and diffused, a plaster or concrete dome.

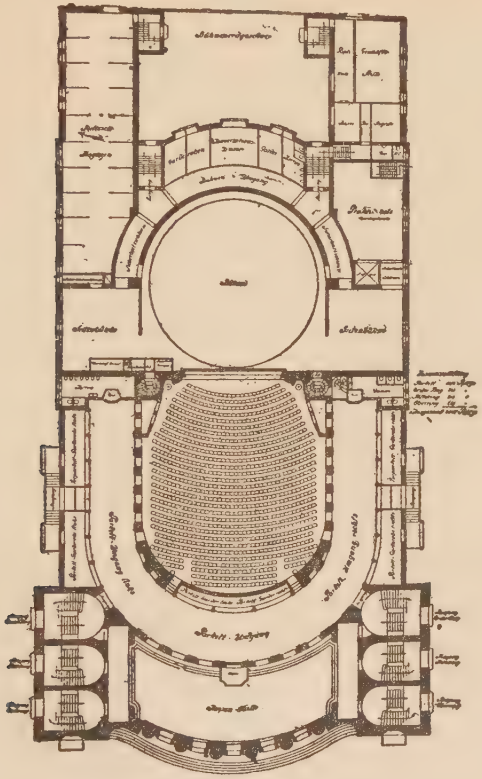
The lighting unit is simpler than it sounds. It is a high-powered light encased in a hood with only one opening. This opening is away from the stage and toward a frame in which are held five bands of colored silk turning on rollers. These bands are of white, black, and the three primary colors. The edges of the various bands of silk are forked to produce a sort of mixing of colors when one is superimposed on another. The bands move freely by means of a motor controlled from a central station. The white light from the lamp may fall upon any of the three primaries or all of them. If it falls only on the blue it is reflected out in a diffused stream of blue. If it falls on all three colors, the mixture produces true white light again. Whatever color of light is produced by the primary bands either singly or in combination,

can be darkened or paled by drawing either the black or the white band partially across.

Actual practice has considerably modified this lighting unit. The quality of diffused light is very fine, but it can only be produced by the use of far more current than would be necessary for direct lighting. Also the heat of the light deteriorates the silk unless an elaborate and expensive fan system is also combined with the light—which means still more current. At the close of the war such considerations as these led the General Electric Company to experiment with applying the principle of the traveling bands to color filters or mediums. They have accordingly produced a modification of the Fortuny system which consists of placing an incandescent lamp behind the bands (which are, of course, of a more transparent material) and permitting the light, colored by the bands, to pass directly to the stage. Either style of unit is placed relatively where our border lights ordinarily hang, in batteries of three or more lamps. Reinhardt in adapting the Fortuny system to his Deutsches Theater, substituted a great lantern of many colored panes, all or any of which could be lighted or dimmed at will.

Now for the dome, or *Kuppelhorizont,* as it is called in Germany. With Fortuny this was to be of silk, stretched taut and smooth by exhausting the air from the space between two surfaces. Such a dome was light, of course, and easily carried about from one

theatre to another, but it could be punctured and it would deteriorate. German ingenuity substituted a



A MODERN GERMAN THEATRE

Plan of the Volksbühne in Berlin, designed by Oskar Kaufmann, showing the relation of revolving stage and sky-dome.

plaster or concrete dome instead. In some theatres—as it is installed in the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York's East Side and in the Beechwood Theatre in

Scarborough, N. Y.—it becomes merely a plaster wall, straight up and down and curving very slightly at the ends. In Earl Carroll's Theatre, now building in New York, the rear and side walls of the stage will be plastered and curved into one another. In other theatres the sky is in a semi-circle like a section of a hollow cylinder or like an ordinary canvas cyclorama made of plaster. Properly it is a true dome, or rather half dome, like a quarter of an orange skin, curving round almost from one side of the proscenium to the other, and from the back of the stage up above the top of the proscenium opening. The true dome appears in the theatre of the Provincetown Players and in the Blythelea theatre in Orange, N. J.

Fortuny would foreswear any but the true dome, since only such a dome, he claims, is the perfect surface for his diffused light to play upon, only such a surface can simulate the depths of the heavens. Whatever Fortuny's feelings may be, a flat plaster sky is better than a canvas sky. It has no wrinkles. It does not stir if a door is opened on the street. Its granular surface catches light and breaks it up into a livelier and more diffused medium. All that may be said for a flat plaster wall or for a wall curving in one direction may be said, of course, with far more vigor for a dome curving in all directions. On such a surface, light, whether direct or reflected, plays marvelously. The small dome at the theatre of the Provincetown Play-

ers near Washington Square, New York, even the miniature dome of compot board installed by Urban in Ziegfeld's *Midnight Frolic* on top of the New Amsterdam Theatre, demonstrates the startling qualities of the *Kuppelhorizont.* It is almost literally impossible for the eye to focus upon the surface of the plaster, to detect the actual depth of the sky. To all intents, the distance is infinite. And it is alive, it is luminous with light.

An incidental virtue of the plaster dome is that it does away with borders or devices for hiding the "flies" from the view of the spectators in the front rows. Curving up above the line of vision, it presents the sky to view at every point. The same result can be obtained by a much higher cyclorama, or by a lower proscenium opening. Both the high cyclorama and the low opening have been extensively used in America during the past six years to do away with borders.

The dome, then, with or without Fortuny's reflected lighting, produces the most perfect semblance of the sky that is possible in the playhouse. Its virtue is not, however, mere realism. It happens that the sky is itself a splendid background for any imaginative or abstract setting, while the dome, being white, can be lighted in any color desired. In this structure the modern artist has, therefore, a medium of great responsiveness and beauty for whatever purpose he may elect.

The dome has, of course, its practical disadvantages.

Its initial cost is large. It cannot be used with a sliding stage, since its ends come practically up to the proscenium. Its top interferes with the gridiron, preventing the use of the rear portion in "flying" or hoisting drops and back walls; this is hardly so serious as might be supposed, since the dome itself, supplemented by "profiles" or set pieces, does away with ordinary drops. The dome works ideally with a revolving stage, with wagon stages or with a sinking stage. Several modifications have been introduced to enable actors and scenery to reach the stage without having to come forward around the ends of the dome. Some domes have a pit in front of their lower edge, which also permits of better lighting effects; some are raised a few feet off the floor; some are pivoted at their front lower corners and tipped up so that scenery may be dragged under the back. The dome is in very wide use throughout Germany and Austria, but it will have difficulty in invading the American commercial theatre so long as the touring system continues and scenery has to be built to fit any stage. The gradual but evident decay of the touring system puts the day of many such improvements not far off.

A new system of background and lights, destined perhaps to succeed where the Fortuny system either failed or had to be extensively modified, has been perfected since the armistice and put on the market by a Swedish company, the *Aktiebolaget Regi och Scen-*

teknik, working in association with German experts. The devices employed are referred to as the Ars system and consist of many ingenious lights added to a cyclorama for which even greater virtues are claimed than for the dome.

The cyclorama is of cloth, so prepared that it refracts the light in the same way as plaster and so weighted that it cannot wrinkle or stir. Furthermore, it is not a permanent obstruction to the use of the full stage. When not employed it remains on a vertical roller at one side of the proscenium. In thirty seconds it can be drawn out and around the back of the stage, hanging from a semi-circular track below the gridiron. This track itself folds out of the way when the use of the entire width or depth of the gridiron is desired.

To light this surface and the stage floor the Ars company has worked out a complicated battery of lamps all controlled from a single switchboard by the prompter's box. The most interesting of these lights are for projecting designs, shapes or photographs on the cyclorama. One system of lights, composed of sixteen projectors with lamps of 7,000 candlepower each, is arranged in two stories about a circular axis. The eight lamps above and the eight below can turn at different speeds and move their lenses upward and downward at will, while projecting on the cyclorama photographs or drawings of clouds printed on positive

colored film. This device is, of course, a purely mechanical trick for producing a realistic sky; it is only in an adaptation to other purposes that it can take on the qualities which reside in the work of the artist.

Such an adaptation has been made. Beneath the cloud machine and close to the lamps that throw any desired shade of light upon the cyclorama hang three projectors similar to those in the cloud machine. With these the producer can throw upon the cyclorama any design in color created by the artist; thus he literally paints his scenery with light. The inventors have also been working upon a flexible wall made of strings of pearl-like beads, which can be given any shape of interior or exterior for the projectors to play upon. When this is worked out, the Ars company will have evolved a sceneryless stage. The designs of the artist will be transferred to colored film and thrown upon the permanent background. These devices have been installed in the Royal Opera in Stockholm, the State Opera in Dresden and La Scala in Milan. When and if they are widely installed the film designs of any artist may be duplicated and distributed to a dozen theatres at a comparatively small cost.

Without a dome, or an Ars cyclorama, the problem of a sky becomes immensely difficult for the artist. He can certainly not achieve illusion with any dyed drop or any painted canvas. The best he can do is to produce a sane conventionalization by applying his

color by the method known as *pointilage,* a method which Urban introduced here during his work at the Boston Opera House and which has since invaded all the scenic studios, even the most old-fashioned, and has been applied to every painted surface on the stage. *Pointilage* is simply the method of the impressionist painter, broken color. Instead of mixing his blue for the sky and applying it as a flat tint Urban and his followers place directly on the canvas the various shades of blue, green and yellow which may go into the mixture. The canvas is "primed" with the more common color; the others are applied in a sort of stipple over the surface. There are two advantages in *pointilage* when applied either to the sky-drop or to an ordinary surface such as a wall. First, it hides the character of the canvas. The eye is caught by the irregularities of the color—small as they are at a distance—instead of by the warped, wrinkled, creased or bulging surface of the canvas. Walls seem solid, skies have less suggestion of canvas about them. Second, the color becomes livelier; the light that strikes these surfaces more intense. Any change in the color of the illuminant registers more directly and more effectively on the various tiny dabs of paint. The impressionists adopted broken color in their attempt to produce the living light of day instead of the north light of a studio. Broken color serves the artist of the theatre in the same fashion.

Such problems and such solutions, whether mechanical or electrical, may mean nothing if the stage artist or the director has no sense of beauty or of drama in his design or in the movement of his people. But by their aid the artist and the director are able to achieve effects far beyond the range of the nineteenth century theatre.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PAINTER.

THE mechanician has contributed to the new art of the theatre a more serviceable stage; the electrician, a more flexible and sculptural light. They gave these things to the older theatre, as well, the theatre of realism. Yet the revolving stage and overhead lighting did not make the realistic theatre any less realistic; rather, they gave it a more illusive realism. It was the artist that turned these gifts to other purposes, to the purposes of spirit and imagination, to the purposes which have dominated the new art of the theatre.

There is, however, a type of artist in the newer theatre who might have gone with the mechanician and the electrician into the older theatre, who would have brought more beauty there, but who would not have brought more illusion. For he would have worked in the older theatre, as he has worked in the newer, with materials and conventions at heart as much opposed to realism as they are to the spirit of the newer theatre. This type of artist I shall call the painter, because his

devotion is to the easel, to the flat canvas, whether he works in the theatre or in his studio. The most striking figure of this sort is Leon Bakst, but you will find artists using his method through all the Russian theatre where, indeed, the artist thus worked as far back as 1902.

This paradox—the presence of artists in the new movement whose methods are fundamentally better fitted to the theatre of the past, and yet to realism no more than to imagination—can be explained only through an understanding of the dual nature of the theatre of the nineteenth century, and of the power of pure design and color in any theatre, old or new. Such an understanding may make us see a little of the gradual, almost unnoticeable process by which one movement in the theatre passes over into another.

We speak of the realistic theatre as if that were all that we knew between the theatre of Shakespeare and the theatre of the new stagecraft. Yet before the realistic theatre and several centuries after Shakespeare and his bear pit, there was a third theatre. It was a theatre of pretense and extravagance, of theatricalism in the worse sense. It was the dead-alive theatre of Victorianism, the theatre where the meagre materials of backdrop, side walls, wings and borders were used as canvases for the smearing of bad color and worse perspective in a "play-actory" pretense at an ostentatious reality. The thing was never realism. It was

THAMAR—DESIGN BY BAKST

Characteristic distortion of false perspective, added to characteristic vigor of color, made this a movingly dramatic setting in spite of old-fashioned scenic methods common to all the Russians.

never imagination. It was merely a routine, rule-of-thumb fake.

Many men, in and out of the "free theatres" of the later nineteenth century, set themselves to destroy this thing. They were typified in Germany by Otto Brahm; in America, by David Belasco. They produced actuality; it was this light that Reinhardt and Stanislavsky first followed, and many workers in the new stagecraft have got little farther than adding beauty to this actuality. These men made actual rooms and plausible exteriors. The great mass of engineering mechanism, new stages, new skies and new lights, which have served the new stagecraft so finely, helped also in getting rid of the old fake and in putting realism in its place. The two-dimensional perspective of the easel painter was first banished from the three-dimensional theatre by the realists.

Æsthetics like life, do not come in water-tight compartments. There is evolution. Now it is quite possible to argue that the old theatricalism was always striving to be real, and that hard, intelligent work pushed it over into naturalism. Certainly realism, as Reinhardt and Stanislavsky practiced it, drifted over into the high expressiveness of the new art. There was a time when Reinhardt produced *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in a forest of real papier-maché trees. Stanislavsky made a Gorky of utter and gutter reality. But they had only to try to add beauty and meaning

to their productions in order to be forced, like all the great artists of the world, into a refinement, a selection and an interpretation which is best expressed through the rather awkward term abstraction. The old theatre of theatricalism had tried to reach a vivid and picturesque reality through certain rule-of-thumb conventions which cabined, cribbed, confined and defeated the purpose. The newer theatre tries to reach beauty and meaning, to win to a vivid expressiveness of the play, through spiritual abstractions. In the old days, stretched canvas, painted with pictures of leaves and branches, tried to look like a forest. In the days of realism, actual, modeled, three-dimensional forms of trees did indeed look not unlike an inferior sort of forest. In the third period, however, that same canvas of the old days, treated frankly as cloth, and either hung in loose tree-like shapes or painted with symbols of nature and draped like the curtain it actually is, becomes an abstraction of a forest, full of all the suggestive beauty of which the artist in colors, shapes, and lights is capable.

In spite of the natural process of development which may be traced from theatricalism to realism and from realism to the abstract art of the new stagecraft, I think there is an essential break to be detected between the stiff and limited art of the past and the new art which is promising a greater break with the physical theatre itself.

From The Theatre Arts Magazine

BORIS GODUNOFF—DESIGN BY GOLOVIN

The square before the cathedrals in the first act of the opera as staged at the Metropolitan Opera House and in Russia. The whole gleaming façade of the churches is painted on the backdrop.

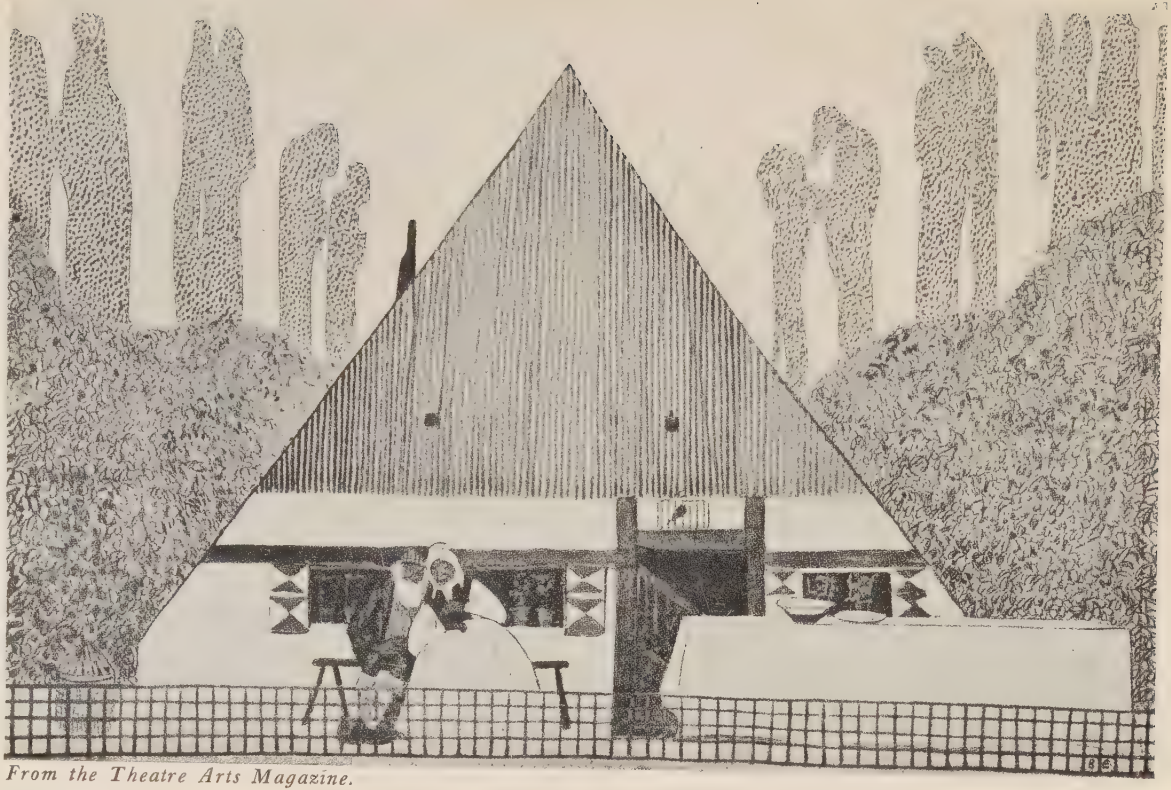
THE PAINTER

The painter of whom I write has allied himself definitely with the new scenic movement, yet by his methods he might better be working in the theatre of the nineteenth century that knew not Brahm nor Belasco. Bakst and the other scenic designers of the Ballets Russes and of the Russian theatre, Golovin, Roerich, Korovin, Yegoroff, Anisfeld, Benois, almost always apply their talents for line, color and interpretative atmosphere to what is essentially the theatre of Garrick and Kean so far as technical method goes. They are content with the old mechanics of theatricalism. They take the great flat canvas backdrops and the tall side-wings of other days, and they place upon these crude and limited surfaces their brilliant and provocative art. As they paint it, the backdrop carries at least two walls of any interior, and whole miles of distant landscape. In *Scheherazade,* as produced by the Ballets Russes, Bakst paints columns, walls and ceiling draperies upon his backdrop. In *Les Sylphides* Benois thus visualizes a whole palace garden. In *The Fire Bird* Golovin rears a towering castle on flat canvas. This is not alone due to the desire of the ballet-masters of Diagileff to keep clear as large a dancing floor as possible, with free access from the sides. The same handling of the backdrops, the same recourse to perspective is to be found in Golovin's extraordinarily fine production of *Boris Godunoff* at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York. He puts

the front of the Cathedral of the Assumption and of the Archangels on his backdrop; he paints a staircase, both rear walls of a room and a little of the ceiling upon the gigantic canvas of his easel-theatre. Yegoroff is as frankly old-fashioned in the mechanics of his *Blue Bird* for the Moscow Art Theatre.

How then is such work a part of the new stagecraft? Partially, perhaps, because of the way in which the painter uses his perspective—taboo as it is among other artists of the new movement—but principally because of his fidelity to the inner emotion of the plays and ballets he decorates, and the vigor with which his line and his color express their atmosphere.

The painter such as Bakst accepts the old conventions of the Victorian theatre against which Gordon Craig and practically all the theorists of the new stagecraft have inveighed most violently; but he sublimates these conventions by his bold handling of them. He still paints perspectives on the backdrop, but he does not try to use them to deceive. He exaggerates to the point where they are at last frank and honest conventions, not pretenses at something else. He flings out walls, rafters, columns and stairs with such sweep and verve that they take on a spiritual life which triumphs over technical limitations. These backdrops arrest and fascinate, not because they suggest reality, but because they are instinct with the creative force of a great artist. Their weakness, it seems to me, is that,



From the Theatre Arts Magazine.

THE BLUE BIRD AT THE MOSCOW ART THEATRE

A sketch by Yegoroff for the Land of Memory. Painted upon the backdrop are silhouettes of trees that stand like mourning figures.

by remaining flat backdrops which once pretended at reality, they remain a link with a false past. If these gigantic canvases were treated frankly as mere decorations and were hung in curtain-like folds, as Arthur Rutherston hung his backgrounds for the forest scene of *Androcles and the Lion,* and Norman Wilkinson many of his scenes in *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* they could keep all their virtues of vigorous design and yet escape the implications of the old-fashioned theatre.

That the designs of these painters are essentially a part of the new movement is not alone because they use perspective unrealistically. Back of this mere technicality are both a purpose and an execution true to the ideals of the newer theatre. They do not merely exaggerate perspective, they exaggerate perspective in such a way as to convey an emotional sense of the play's or the ballet's meaning. In *Thamar,* for instance, that pantomime of the savage mountain queen who lures travellers to their death in her arms, the amazing delta of her towering walls carries an oppressive sense of her remote and mountainous power, of her hard and rocklike cruelty, almost a symbol of her passion.

Similarly and perhaps more obviously the colors that these painters use dramatize the emotions of the actors. When Bakst first set *Scheherazade* his design was lively with the yellows of the orient, but to con-

vey more closely the passions of this story of debauchery between the women of the sultan's harem and his negro slaves, Bakst reworked the same design in lustful greens cut by three turgid red pillars. In the smouldering browns and dusky reds of the tents and plains of *Prince Igor* Roerich conveyed the earthy and

COSTUMES BY BAKST

primal vigor of these fiery people of the steppes. Nicolas Roerich, who like Boris Anisfeld, has now made his home in America and who is designing settings for the Chicago Opera Company, is perhaps the most conscious employer of color as an expression of emotion. Each of his scenes has a color-key as definite in its dramatic appropriateness as the musical color of the composer. In his forthcoming production of *Tristan und Isolde* for the Chicago Opera Com-

PRINCE IGOR—DESIGN BY ROERICH

As realized by the Ballets Russes, the larger portions of this design appeared upon the backdrop, with a few profile flats carrying the nearer tents of the Hunnish encampment.

pany you will find both the color of Mark and the color of the lovers upon the stage in the second act. By dividing his proscenium with a thin column into two arched openings Roerich is able to show you in one the sombre purples of the frowning castle, and in the other the amorous moonlit greens of the landscape and garden that lie before it.

Finally, there is the selection of pictorial objects and their arrangement to convey in another way the atmosphere of story, music or dance. Recall for a moment the scene of encampment in *Prince Igor* and the round and hutlike tents of the tribesmen rising out of the soil like the great breasts of some earth mother to nourish the beginnings of the rude race of men. Or, in Yegoroff's Land of Memory in *The Blue Bird* at the Moscow Art Theatre, the overhanging trees above the little cottage, standing in silhouette like the calmly sorrowing figures of past generations. Or, in the scene before the cathedrals in Golovin's production of *Boris Godunoff,* the towering white grandeur of the churches and the sweep of the red sacramental carpet made by the priestly procession in the square at their feet.

Of the painters who have brought their talents almost unchanged from another field and given them as they stood to the new art, Bakst had been the only name known widely to the theatregoer. He has designed the great bulk of the productions of the Ballets Russes, and his color, his line, and particularly his vigorous

and daring costumes have drawn our attention from men who seem to me greater artists, in the theatre or out of it. Golovin I feel to be Bakst's superior; Roerich, too, though he has shown less in our theatre. Roerich's genius lies in a sort of primitive mysticism. He is priest and poet of old, bare and barbarous Russia. Golovin—like Korovin, another of the Russian painters, who has worked with Meyerhold, though not with the Diagileff Ballets Russes—emphasizes less the primitive, though he draws his strength also from the racial simplicity of the Slavic peoples. From Bakst he stands out sharply, as sharply as Michelangelo from Botticelli. Golovin's color is original, but it is not obviously vivid or flauntingly bright. He does not pile up great heaps of vermillion, against the peacock blues and metallic greens that delight Bakst. His superiority lies in vigor, in wholesome power. The pungency of the earth is in his color, the majesty of the earth in his handling of it.

Seen in the large the Russians have brought the virtues of the painter, the great painter, into the theatre. They have brought great ability to replace the mediocre talents of the little men who turn out scenery in our commercial scenic studios. They might have given these things to the theatre of 1880, for they have demanded nothing of the stage that the stage did not boast in those days. But they have each an individual genius of such power that had their work appeared in

the theatre of those days it would inevitably have upset current conceptions of the possibilities of scenic design; they would have drawn forth the labors of Appia and Craig years earlier. It was only necessary that the painter at work upon the stage should add to his genius such a creative study of the possibilities of the stage as he had made of the possibilities of his canvas. This study would have carried him away from the old mechanism of painted backdrops. He would have seen and recognized the three-dimensional and plastic nature of this place where human beings walk, run, leap and meet in spiritual as well as physical conflict. It was the distinction of Appia and Craig that they so studied the stage and recognized its possibilities.

In one sense the painter pure and simple has always had his place in the playhouse, and has always had something to contribute. Add the painter to any production, and you add a definite something of beauty and even greater potentialities of expressiveness. Add an *entrepreneur* such as Sergei Diagileff, founder of the Ballets Russes and the direction such as Fokin's, Nijinski's, and Massin's, and you have an art of music, story, color, above all rhythm, which need worry little about perspective, revolving stages or old-fashioned foots and borders. The Ballet Russe has ignored the technical possibilities of stage design which the past twenty-five years have developed. But it has always called to its assistance the greatest of artistic talent; it

has done more in the field of direction, in the climacteric handling of color and movement in its dancers, than any other institution; and in bringing Matisse, Picasso and Derain into the theatre it has kept more than ahead of the philosophic and spiritual progress of the new stagecraft.

Yet in the face of the brilliant achievements of the Russians the fact still remains that the painter alone is not the heart of the new stagecraft. The heart is the creative and directing genius who may and who should be an artist able to express himself in line and color, and able above all to study anew the problem of the theatre and to strike out both technically and spiritually towards new solutions.

CHAPTER V.

APPIA—THE LIGHT AS DRAMATIST.

IF we seek for the conscious and constructive beginnings of the new art of the theatre we must seek for them in a book about opera. If we wish to find the first printed record of original thought on the stage as a three-dimensional fabric capable of creating ecstatic spiritual illusion we must read *Die Musik und die Inscenierung,* written by Adolphe Appia, a retiring and little-known Italian-Swiss, and published in a German translation in 1899.

In the future there may develop much controversy over the positions of Adolphe Appia and Gordon Craig in the history of the new stagecraft. The facts are simple but relatively unimportant: Appia printed his first book of theory in French in 1893. He drew some of his most famous designs for Wagnerian settings in 1895 and 1896. He published his elaborate study of the art of the theatre as related to Wagner's operas in 1899. Craig, who began as an actor, left Irving's company in 1896 to study stage management. He made his first productions in London about 1900. His first exhibition of designs was in 1902. His first published writings appeared in 1905.

The important question rather is what impact the ideas of the two men had on the stage. Today, after twenty years, less is known and less has been exactly written about Appia and his ideas than about any other major factor in the regeneration of our theatre. Everyone knows Craig, for Craig's temperament was its own press agent. When he succeeded in making productions his fame was spread; when he failed to agree with the producers who called him into their theatres he grew perhaps more famous through controversy. There were always his fixed exhibitions and his short, easy and provocative essays; unlike Appia he cared no more than his readers for philosophic dialects. Except for a few German producers and critics there are not many who know just how much the modern theatre owes to Appia, the pioneer. Because so few now know the exact nature and extent of his theories, it may be justly argued that few knew them in 1900; while within a few years everyone knew Craig. The question of whether Appia or Craig was the originator of the new theatrical movement is a perplexed and profitless question. I believe myself that they were merely two answering parts in a complex of nervous forces which were played upon by a new creative *Zeitgeist* in the years from 1895 to 1905. Appia answered a little the more quickly, that is all.

No one has translated Appia into English; almost no one reads him. He is too solid, too difficult, too

thorough. Yet his little-known theories strike to the heart of the stage-problem. By the divine accident of which we witness another example in Craig, he happened to be a remarkably fine designer; yet if he had never illustrated his theories in brilliant sketches his position would still be unique. He anticipates, he overshadows. Alone and mysterious, a myth, a Titan, he presaged a revolution in thought about the theatre. And curiously enough he wrote only of the problem of production as it applies to the music-dramas of Richard Wagner.

Among the theorists and practitioners of the new art of production Appia is set apart by two things. First, he was not the pure painter; he did not, like Bakst and so many of the Russians, see the stage as an easel awaiting his glorification. Second, he was not, like Craig, impatient with plays, playwrights, and actors, with everything except the artist; he did not like Craig see the stage as something to be made over into a new art of pure design, pure movement.

Appia is sharp in his criticism of the pretense and the pretentiousness of the tasteless theatricalism and the uncritical realism in the theatre of the nineties; his diatribes on the stage of his day are devastating, and perhaps the only easily readable portions of his book. He splits off from the pure painters in attacking the use of both flat lighting and flat painting. He is with Craig in banishing the footlights and false per-

spective. But he goes further than Craig and further than all in the basic philosophy of his art—the dominating place of light in the theatre.

Appia sees action as the heart of the theatre. "In the theatre," he says, "we should seek to strengthen the dramatic action." But he is thoroughly orthodox, as well as thoroughly sound, in his search for the source of this action. "It is the presence of the actor upon the stage which causes dramatic action; without actors there would be no action." It is possible, of course, to believe that the actor of whom Appia writes could be the *Übermarionette* of Craig, but nowhere does Appia hint at this. He is absorbed with the problem of bringing truth and beauty into the relations of our plays and actors and settings as we know them.

Looking at the stage of his day Appia saw the fundamental error of all production; the conflict of the dead setting and the living actor. In the most extreme cases this took the form not only of painted canvas against human flesh but of painted canvas distorted into false perspective and given the lie by the presence of the actor as a measuring stick beside it. Against the two-dimensional paintings on the backdrops and wings there was set the three-dimensional and moving actor. The intricate mechanisms of the eye detected the fraud. It was necessary to give the setting actual depth. Yet even that would not be enough. Rocks of wood and canvas, trees of papier-mâché, could never unite with

the actuality of the actor. No amount of realism in setting could ever resolve this conflict, could ever conjure us away from the knowledge that we were in a world of pretense.

Appia might have offered abstract design—free of any pretense at reality—as the solution; he might have put the actor against a background frankly theatrical, frankly a means of expressing in color or shape the emotion of the scene. Instead he chose to make the setting an atmosphere; to let the background of natural objects be refined, simplified and made dramatic, and then beautified, softened and united with the living actor, through the other live factor in the theatre —the light.

The abolition of flat perspective, the giving of three dimensions to all stage objects, seems the least remarkable contribution of Appia; but twenty-five years ago all this was almost a revolution. You will see in the photographs of *Uncle Vanya* at the Moscow Art Theatre a flight of thirty or forty steps ascending the backdrop from the garden, where the actors sit, to the house where some of them are supposed to live.

Appia's leap ahead to light as the core of the drama was incomprehensible to his day, and it is not yet appreciated in ours, in spite of all the growing experiments in pure, arbitrary and abstract light. Quite as remarkable in one respect was the way in which, seeking to make light the core of the drama, he anticipated

the theory, practice and mechanism of modern stage lighting.

As Appia analyzed it there were only four sources of light in the nineties: the border lights above, the footlights below, the spot lights or bunch lights at the sides and light thrown from behind through transparencies. The border lights and the footlights produced a flat, shadowless light. Illumination through transparent or translucent drops offered little usefulness. To fight the picture gallery lighting of the borders and foots there were only the spot lights and bunch lights. These supplied illumination from a single source, and consequently shadows. And in shadows controlled and modified by the diffused light of the foots and borders, Appia recognized the medium for giving both the setting and the actors the same sculptural three-dimensional values. The diffused light of the foots and borders served to make the scene visible. The direct light of spots and bunches served to provide dramatic quality. Thus analyzing the crude lighting equipment of the nineties Appia anticipated the extensive use which we make today of rows of high-powered incandescent lights overhead, in the place of the border lights, and the restriction of the footlights to a secondary, practically corrective place in stage lighting.

Appia made himself definitely a *regisseur* of the new stage art, as well as a designer of arresting stage

From The Theatre Arts Magazine.

DIE WALKÜRE—APPIA'S DESIGNS

On this page and opposite page 84 appear four of the seven sketches by Adolphe Appia, from his *Die Musik und die Inscenierung,* indicating lighting and arrangement of the players at different stages of the third act of Wagner's music-drama. Above is the setting itself; below, the scene as it appears at the rise of the curtain.

pictures, when he went beyond the quality of light upon the stage to a consideration of how the movement of the light and the shape of the various parts of the settings could be arranged to make the actor still more a living expression of the playwright's action.

The designs for *Tristan und Isolde, Das Rheingold, Die Walküre, Siegfried,* and *Götterdämmerung,* which are included in *Die Musik und Die Inscenierung,* the designs which he has since made for *Parsifal* and the settings which he conceived for Claudel's *L'Annonce faite à Marie* during his work with Jaques-Dalcroze in the remarkable theatre-hall of the latter's school at Hellerau-bei-Dresden, have a majestic beauty, an appropriate and arresting dignity which place them far above a great deal of perfervid and eccentric work of the new stagecraft. They are on a level with Craig's so far as grandeur of conception goes, and exceed them in practicability, though they are inferior as drawings.

Invariably these designs are not only arresting in themselves but arresting as an expression of the drama. They never exist for themselves alone. They follow the prescription that Appia set for the forest of *Siegfried:* "We must no longer try to create the illusion of a forest; but instead the illusion of a man in the atmosphere of a forest." He particularizes: "When the forest trees, stirred by the breeze, attract the attention of Siegfried, we, the spectators, should see Siegfried

bathed in the moving lights and shadows, and not the movement of rags of canvas agitated by stage tricks. *The scenic illusion lies in the living presence of the actor.*"

It is obvious that Appia is designing more than mere painted backgrounds, however good. He is creating a whole plastic stage and filling it with a dramatic and dynamic light. He believes that the actor takes on meaning in two ways, is significant by two things with which he comes in contact. His movements have beauty and significance only as they play upon natural objects and shapes, and are outlined and sculptured by light.

"The two primary conditions for the artistic display of the human body on the stage are these: a light which gives it plastic value, and a plastic arrangement of the setting which gives value to its attitudes and movements. The movement of the human body must have obstacles in order to express itself. All artists know that beauty of movement depends on the variety of points of support offered it by the ground and by natural objects. The movements of the actor can be made artistic only through the appropriate shape and arrangement of the surfaces of the setting." The shape and positions of the rocks in the third act of *Die Walküre,* as Appia places them, give the actors the proper opportunity for movement and display in relation to the action of the scene. Copeau is one of the few modern directors to appreciate the possibilities of this theory of Appia's.

From The Theatre Arts Magazine

DIE WALKÜRE—APPIA'S DESIGNS

Two later stages of lights and actors; above, the Valkyrs cower before the cloud in which Wotan appears; below, the scene as he goes.

Similarly "an object or an actor takes on a plastic quality only through the light that strikes it, and the plasticity can only be of artistic value when the light is artistically handled." Light, in other words, can give the actor and the objects of the setting sculptural beauty appropriate to the drama.

Furthermore the changes in light, as it plays over the actor as well as the setting, its position and intensity, its movement throughout the scene, are of paramount importance. The drama of the physical and spiritual action can be interpreted by the light. Thus Appia schemes the last act of *Tristan* in such a way as to make the light and shadow from the sun play its own drama. At the beginning Tristan lies in the shade of the castled nook which Appia has provided for his retreat, with the tree casting a shadow over him and the sunlight touching only his feet. As his strength rallies the sunlight creeps up his body. When Isolde comes it reaches his head and bathes the two lovers. Then the sun slowly passes, leaving only a spot of brightness in the doorway by which Mark and his followers enter. "The light fades little by little, until the scene is enveloped in a dark twilight. The curtain falls on a calm, peaceful picture, of uniform tone, where the eye distinguishes only the last reflection of sunset lighting softly the white robe of Isolde."

In *Die Musik und die Inscenierung* Appia not only described such scenes as these. He illustrated succes-

sive stages of the lighting by means of drawings of the setting and people at various moments of the play: four sketches for the second act of *Tristan,* two for the third act, seven for the third act of the *Die Walküre.*

Appia has worked even less than Craig in actual production, and his writings are less read. Like Craig, he has long been inactive professionally. Yet his designs are still stimulating his fellow artists after twenty-five years, and reforms for which he argued—the abolition of perspective and the creation of a genuine three-dimensional stage by means of sculpturesque lighting—are now commonplaces of the new stagecraft. It was perhaps his chief distinction that he anticipated in the art of the theatre the conception of time as an actual dimension which science has gone far toward establishing in the work crowned by Einstein. In his *Time Machine* H. G. Wells wrote of time as the fourth dimension without which length, breadth and thickness could not exist. Appia, who did so much to emphasize the physical setting as a three-dimensional structure, added a fourth when he wrote: "The *mise en scène* is a picture composed in time."

CHAPTER VI.

THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF GORDON CRAIG.

THE great virtue of Gordon Craig is that he is not a painter but a man of the theatre. He practiced the art of acting before he practiced the art of design, and so he knows the theatre as a creative instrument. To him it is not a place that offers its backdrop as the hugest canvas any artist ever had. To him it is a place where beauty can be made without backdrop, actor or playwright. It is a place of consecration that takes all of a man, all of a dozen men, all of a dozen men in one man.

At the heart of Craig, deeper than the beauty of his stage designs, lies a great fundamental conception: The theatre is a unity; it needs an artist director who can bend its every craft to achieve that unity. He phrased it in his first book, *The Art of the Theatre* (1905):

"*The art of the theatre* is neither acting nor the play, it is not scene nor dance, but it consists of all the elements of which these things are composed: action, which is the very spirit of acting; words, which are the body of the play; line and color, which are the very heart of the scene; rhythm, which is the very essence of

dance. One is no more important than the other, no more than one color is more important to a painter than another, or one note more important than another to a musician."

Three years later he had gone on from the spiritual essential to prescribe the mechanism by which it should be achieved:

"It is impossible for a work of art ever to be produced where more than one brain is permitted to direct; and if works of art are not seen in the Theatre this one reason is a sufficient one, though there are plenty more." There must be one master in the theatre, "one man capable of inventing and rehearsing a play: of designing and superintending the construction of both scenery and costume: of writing any necessary music: of inventing such machinery as is needed and the lighting that is to be used."

You may detect a certain extravagance in this. It is the extravagance of the ideal. It holds the essential truth that there must be in the directing head of a theatre the æsthetic knowledge of all that is neded to bring a play to life, and of where these things are to be found. To know this, to understand, prescribe, select, criticize and guide, a director must have first-hand creative feeling for the work of playwright, actor and designer. Upon that minimum Craig would fix his demands of the practical theatre. In his faith, in his writings, in his inspiration, he would soar up and beyond to the

great, creative all-inclusive artist of the playhouse who may never be born.

Craig is, as I have said, a man of the theatre. He is not, however, the master of the theatre that he describes. If he were, he would have had a theatre under his control these twenty years, if not in England, then in Germany or Russia. Between 1900 and 1903, when he was fresh from four years of cogitation on the problem, he accomplished seven productions in London, acting as stage manager as well as designing scenery and costumes. They were *Dido and Æneas, The Masque of Love,* Handel's opera, *Acis and Galatea,* Laurence Housman's nativity play, *Bethlehem,* part of *Sword and Song,* Ibsen's *Vikings,* and *Much Ado about Nothing.* One gathers that the response of neither the British public nor the British patron of art was hearty. One gathers also that in the next few years, during which German managers offered opportunities for coöperation beset with very human misconceptions of his purpose, Craig was not able to develop the patience that understands lesser men and slowly and painstakingly bends them to its desires. One gathers that the creative impulse could not drive itself through the practical theatre to proper expression, and that, retiring to the studio and the writing desk, it let itself go with a vigor that often approached abandon. Only Duse and Stanislavsky have since succeeded in enlisting Craig's aid.

The auto-intoxication of the theorist who is not given

his opportunity to create is visible in Craig's writing. His brilliant basic theories whirl off into unresolved contradictions, ecstatic over-statements. He cannot hold his gigantic conception of the theatre with the grip of a Michelangelo or a Leonardo. Presently we find this man who has gone through apprenticeship and accomplishment appearing to the public eye as a man who would eliminate practically everything and everybody of the theatre as we have known it for twenty centuries, except a mask and a marionette.

When Craig wrote of action, words, line, color, rhythm as of equal importance, he added: "In one respect, perhaps, action is the most valuable part. Action bears the same relation to the Art of the Theatre as drawing does to painting, and melody does to music. The Art of the Theatre has sprung from action—movement—dance." This reservation was to develop a whole new theatre—actorless, without playwright, without painter, without musician, without any of the men, except the director, whom Craig saw combined in the master of the Art of the Theatre.

In 1907 Craig banished the actor from his theory. The actor was too human, too variable, too emotional a creature for the demands of a theatre directed by a single creative mind. "Acting is not an art. It is therefore incorrect to speak of the actor as an artist. For accident is an enemy of the artist. . . . Art arrives only by design. Therefore in order to make any work of art

it is clear we may only work on those materials with which we can calculate. Man is not one of these materials. . . . The actions of the actor's body, the expression of his face, the sounds of his voice, all are at the mercy of the winds of his emotions: winds that must blow forever round the artist, moving without unbalancing him. But with the actor, emotion possesses him; it seizes upon his limbs, moving them whither it will. As with his movement, so is it with the expression of his face. The mind struggling and succeeding for a moment in moving the eyes, or the muscles of the face whither it will; the mind bringing the face for a few moments into thorough subjection, is suddenly swept aside by the emotion which has grown hot through the action of the mind. Instantly, like lightning, and before the mind has time to cry out and protest, the hot passion has mastered the actor's expression. It is the same with his voice as with his movements. Emotion cracks the voice of the actor. It sways his voice to join in the conspiracy against his mind. Emotion works upon the voice of the actor, and he produces the impression of discordant emotion. It is of no avail to say that emotion is the spirit of the gods, and is precisely what the artist aims to produce; first of all this is not true, and even if it were quite true, every stray emotion, every casual feeling, cannot be of value. . . . Art, as we have said, can admit of no accidents. That, then, which the

actor gives us, is not a work of art; it is a series of accidental confessions."

In the same essay Craig suggests three ways out of the dilemma of an actorless stage that would not be given up wholly to the painter or at any rate the scenic artist. One is to retain the actor but to confine his expression to "symbolic gesture." Another is to revive the mask. The third is his famous project for an *"Übermarionette"*—a gloriously facile instrument flexible and graceful beyond our conception of puppets today, through which the mind of the artist could create human movement in agreement with the "noble artificiality" which Craig seeks in the theatre. In a passage that stamps Craig as a master of words as well as pencil, lights and acting, Craig pictures the origins of drama in the marionette.

In 1908 Craig complained of other interlopers in the vineyard of the theatre. One of the earliest was the playwright. As examples he adduced Shakespeare and Molière, both of whom, he omitted to observe, were actors. The musician had also trod down the vineyard; there was Wagner. "Today we find that the painter is actually making eyes at the little place."

It takes the greatest honesty and insight and self-control not to say that indeed he *is* making eyes at it. And that the eyes belong to a certain actor who would banish playwright, player, and musician and leave the theatre to pure vision. It is only the ecstacy of truth

in Craig's words that can make us hold back from a too easy criticism of the greatest creative force—barring Ibsen—that has entered the theatre of the world since Shakespeare and Molière. Craig questions all factors in the theatre today. He chastens the actor. He throws out Shakespeare (favorite dramatist of the scenic decorators), along with the didactic playwright. He challenges the musician even while he cries that the art of the theatre must take cognizance of rhythm and dance. He goes to the length of tracing the derivation of the word *theatre* back to the Greek, "a place for seeing shows", derived from the Greek θεάομαι I see, and adding: "Note: Not a word about it being a place for *hearing 30,000 words babbled* out in two hours."

Craig has the right to respectful attention even when he grows most eccentric, most extreme, most inconsistent, because he has a vision of the future theatre, a real vision, filled with beauty and, better than beauty, religious ecstacy. He looks for the coming of a theatric Messiah "who shall contain in him all the qualities which go to make up a master of the theatre," and he looks for "the reform of the theatre as an instrument. When that is accomplished, when the theatre has become a masterpiece of mechanism, when it has invented a technique, it will without any effort develop a *creative art* of its own." In another passage he says: "There shall spring so great an art, and one so universally beloved, that I prophesy that a new religion will be found

contained in it. That religion will preach no more, but it will reveal. It will not show us the definite images which the sculptor and the painter show. It will unveil thought to our eyes, silently—by movements—in visions."

Such a vision would probably have done less than nothing for the reform of our current stage had Craig confined his efforts to its explication. Craig has played the major part in making over our methods of production and altering our notions of the theatre—in fact, in forcing us nearer to his own conception of the future art—because in theory and execution he has devoted much time and a great genius to the ordinary detail of mounting plays as we find them.

The first of his contributions has been a brilliant attack upon realism, upon our absorption with the natural. All through his fugitive essays runs this impatience with the accidental, this insistence upon the discovery, the study, and the presentation of only the essential, the necessary. Three volumes of reprinted articles, two of them illustrated with designs of extraordinary beauty and originality, carry the burden of this message. They also carry practical detail, prescriptions of technique, often as amusingly and intriguingly put as this ban upon the footlights:

Playgoer: Well, will you tell me why they put lights all along the floor of the stage—footlights they call them, I believe?

Stage Director: Yes, footlights.

Playgoer: Well, why are they put on the ground?

Stage Director: It is one of the questions which has puzzled all the theatre reform gentlemen, and none have been able to find an answer, for the simple reason that there is no answer. There never was an answer, there never will be an answer. The only thing to do is to remove all the footlights out of all the theatres as quickly as possible and say nothing about it. It is one of those queer things which nobody can explain, and at which children are always surprised. Little Nancy Lake, in 1812, went to Drury Lane Theatre, and her father tells us that she also was astonished at the footlights. Said she:—

> "And there's a row of lamps, my eye.
> How they do blaze—I wonder why
> They keep them on the ground."
>
> —*Rejected Addresses.*

That was in 1812 and we are still wondering.

For a further practical detail Craig has set himself always, in work and in precept, against false perspective. In spite of the Russians he detects nothing of "noble artificiality" in it. In his *Towards a New Theatre* (1912), he writes of his designs: "I think you will very seldom see things here in perspective: avenues leading up to goodness knows where and which no one could walk on . . . when I came to design scenes for myself I avoided putting any place in my picture which could *not* be traveled into actually by the actors. Now if in the drama you have mention of a staircase

which no one was even able to ascend or descend, and if the dramatist wishes to show that nobody ever will be able to ascend that staircase, then there seems some sense in *painting* it instead of building it. But if steps are to be shown in some scene—let us say in *Julius Cæsar*—which not only fantasy but common sense would people with many figures, then it is preposterous to paint those steps—they must be built; for if you only paint them, and no one ever passes up or down them, you suggest to the spectator that there was something very eccentric about Rome on that particular afternoon. Is not this true?

"So you will see this rule running right through my designs. There is not a spot in them which could not be walked upon and lived in. Where I have introduced a pyramid, as in the design for *Cæsar and Cleopatra,* I have put it so far off that in nature no one would see the figures upon it. It is at such a distance that our imagination alone could people it—and our fancy runs up and down it with ease."

Craig has given in one memorable chapter in *On the Art of the Theatre* a complete and practical account of the technique of the new stagecraft which supplies a vision of the ends to be sought in both setting and direction, as well as the concrete detail of how to design a setting:

"Come now, we take *Macbeth.* We know the play well. In what kind of place is that play laid? How

does it look, first of all to our mind's eye, secondly to our eye?

"I see two things. I see a lofty and steep rock, and I see the moist cloud which envelops the head of this rock. That is to say, a place for fierce and warlike men to inhabit, a place for phantoms to nest in. Ultimately this moisture will destroy the rock; ultimately these spirits will destroy the men. Now then, you are quick in your question as to what actually to create for the eye. I answer as swiftly—place there a rock. Let it mount up high. Swiftly I tell you, convey the idea of a mist which hugs the head of this rock. Now, have I departed at all for one-eighth of an inch from the vision which I saw in the mind's eye?

"But you ask me what form this rock shall take and what colour? What are the lines which are the lofty lines, and which are to be seen in any lofty cliff? Go to them, glance but a moment at them; now quickly set them down on your paper; *the lines and their direction,* never mind the cliff. Do not be afraid to let them go high; they cannot go high enough; and remember that on a sheet of paper which is but two inches square you can make a line which seems to tower miles in the air, and you can do the same on your stage, for it is all a matter of proportion and nothing to do with actuality.

"You ask about the colours? What are the colours that Shakespeare has indicated for us? Do not first look at Nature, but look in the play of the poet. Two;

one for the rock, the man; one for the mist, the spirit. Now, quickly, take and accept this statement from me. Touch not a single other colour, but only these two colours through your whole progress of designing your scene and your costumes, yet forget not that each colour contains many variations. . . .

"But the rock and its cloud of mist is not all that you have to consider. You have to consider that at the base of this rock swarm the clans of strange earthly forces, and that in the mist hover the spirits innumerable; to speak more technically, you have to think of the sixty or seventy actors whose movements have to be made at the base of the scene, and of the other figures which obviously may not be suspended on wires, and yet must be seen to be clearly separate from the human and more material beings.

"It is obvious that some curious sense of a dividing line must be created somewhere upon the stage so that the beholder, even if he look but with his corporeal eye, shall be convinced that the two things are separate things. I will tell you how to do this. Line and proportion having suggested the material rock-like substance, tone and colour (one colour) will have given the ethereal to the mist-like vacuum. Now then, you bring this tone and colour downwards until it reaches nearly to the level of the floor; but you must be careful to bring this colour and this tone down in some place which is removed from the material rock-like substance.

From Towards a New Theatre.

MACBETH—DESIGN BY GORDON CRAIG

The sleep-walking scene. In spite of the scale of the setting the figure of Lady Macbeth always achieves significant prominence. At the base of the column, next the steps, appear carvings of ancient kings.

"You ask me to explain technically what I mean. Let your rock possess but half the width of the stage, let it be the side of a cliff round which many paths twist, and let these paths mingle in one flat space taking up half or perhaps three quarters of the stage. You have room enough there for all your men and women. Now then, open your stage and all other parts. Let there be a void below as well as above, and in this void let your mist fall and fade; and from that bring the figures which you have fashioned and which are to stand for the spirits. I know you are yet not quite comfortable in your mind about this rock and this mist; I know that you have got in the back of your head the recollection that a little later on in the play come several interiors, as they are called. But, bless your heart, don't bother about that. Call to mind that the interior of a castle is made from the stuff which is taken from the quarries. Is it not precisely the same colour to begin with? And do not the blows of the axes which hew out the great stones give a texture to each stone which resembles the texture given it by natural means, as rain, lightning, frost? So you will not have to change your mind or change your impression as you proceed. You will have but to give variations of the same theme, the rock—the brown; the mist—the grey; and by these means you will, wonder of wonders, actually have preserved unity. Your success will depend upon your capacity to make variations upon these two themes; but

remember never to let go of the main theme of the play when searching for variations in the scene.

"By means of your scene you will be able to mould the movements of the actors, and you must be able to increase the impression of your numbers without actually adding another man to your forty or fifty. You must not, therefore, waste a single man, nor place him in such a position that an inch of him is lost. Therefore the place on which he walks must be the most carefully studied parts of the whole scene. But in telling you not to waste an inch of him I do not therefore mean to convey that you must *show* every inch of him. It is needless to say more on this point. By means of suggestion you may bring on the stage a sense of all things —the rain, the sun, the wind, the snow, the hail, the intense heat—but you will never bring them there by attempting to wrestle and close with Nature, in order so that you may seize some of her treasure and lay it before the eyes of the multitude. By means of suggestion in movement you may translate all the passions and the thoughts of vast numbers of people, or by means of the same you can assist your actor to convey the thoughts and the emotions of the particular character he impersonates. Actuality, accuracy of detail, is useless upon the stage."

Here in this passage Craig made answer—before answer was asked—to the critics of the new stagecraft who see it or pretend to see it as only a matter of scenery,

as the elevation of one factor in a production to dominance over older and more essential factors. Here is a rounded and complete emotional interpretation of a play, analyzing the emotional values established by the dramatist, interpreting these values in the terms of human actors and stage atmosphere, in movements, lights, color, line, costume, and background. When a man has written thus of the workaday business of production and has reached out to a vision of a theatre of the future filled with the exaltation of religious ritual, he should not have to defend himself or his school from the charge of being painters who are totally absorbed in the designing of odd, new-fangled scenery. Essentially the type of stage artist who has developed with the new stagecraft is the pictorialist who should be director. When he has a theatre at his command he creates without bothering at all with design or picture. When he has no theatre, as Craig has had no theatre for fifteen years, he is forced by his creative spirit to put upon paper some slight suggestion of the thing that he would conjure forth in actors, canvas and light. But he remains, for all that, a man of the theatre, not a painter dabbling in a new medium.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PLASTIC STAGE.

THE theories of Gordon Craig and the theories of Adolphe Appia, working out through the practice of some fifty scenic artists, resulted within fifteen years in the creation of a plastic stage. Except for the brilliant productions of the Russians, the old two-dimensional scenery disappeared. Settings, like actors, came in three dimensions. Pillars were molded in the round, or at least the half-round; doors had frames, and ceilings had moldings. In the pursuit of beauty and imagination real steps, deep casements, solid cornices became as common in plays by Maeterlinck, as in productions by Belasco. The campaign against the false perspective brought in the architectural or plastic stage.

The case against painted perspective is simple enough. It is to be found in the mechanism of the eyes. There were—and sometimes there still are—two sorts of stage perspective; and there are certain adjustments of the eye that almost entirely defeat them. One variety of perspective used to be employed in the side walls of rooms; the other is still to be seen on our backdrops.

It was a common practice twenty and twenty-five

years ago for the scene painter to scale down the height of his side walls and the designs upon them as they stretched towards the rear of the stage. This was intended to produce an effect of greater depth. The perspective of the two sides could not, of course, remain true for more than a few spectators in the middle of the house; for the rest, one side or the other or both were patently distorted. The absurdity of the device became glaringly evident, even to the favored few in the central seats, the moment an actor moved about upon the stage. When he stood beside the wall at the front of the stage he reached perhaps a third of the distance to the upper moldings. When he walked to the rear, the moldings rushed down to meet him, and he grew a cubit in stature.

The other sort of perspective is still to be seen on our stage. It is the painting of imaginary landscapes, roads, buildings and trees on the backdrop. Skilful lighting and good painting can do a great deal to mitigate the fake in this, but it cannot quite fool the lenses and muscles of the eye.

The first and greatest check upon false perspective is the simplest—the stereoscopic quality of vision. Nature is seen with two eyes set three or four inches apart. These eyes convey to the brain two pictures of nature, each slightly different from the other in proportions and perspective for every point in front of or beyond the object focused. The brain may be said to

mix these pictures in order to obtain an impression of three-dimensional nature. The process was familiar to an older generation in the stereoscopes that rejoiced "best parlors." When our two eyes look at a perspective on a backdrop, each one sees the same picture. The stereoscopic double-vision is lacking, and the brain immediately recognizes the deception. Furthermore when the eye looks from one object in nature to another at a different distance, the lens of each eye expands or contracts in order to accommodate the focus to the distance, almost as we focus cameras. The eyes also shift very slightly in their sockets as they "triangulate" upon the new object. By these two movements the eyes are able to report to the brain a fairly accurate estimate of how far off the thing gazed at may be. Only when the distance is very great do the readjustments become negligible. The application of this to the theatre is that the eyes will accurately report that the backdrop itself, with the paint and canvas actually focused upon, is fifteen, twenty or fifty yards away. Any object painted by the artist to appear at that distance will seem more or less normal. But the moment the eyes move off it and touch another that should be at a greater or less distance the illusion is gone. They fall upon a mountain peak four miles off upon the upper corner of the backdrop without reporting any change in focus or triangulation. They make no readjustments. They report flatness, not depth.

A minor form of perspective is to be found in painted shadows; it attempts to indicate the roundness of moldings or the edge of door frames by *chiaroscuro.* This fails partly on account of the adjustment of the eyes, but largely because the angles of the shadows cannot be the same for all portions of the house. It is impossible to eliminate the contrast between the position and quality of the true shadows and of the false. Only under very dim illumination can paint counterfeit the luminous contrasts between light and shadow.

There is only one respect in which painted perspective is still possible on a stage that is three-dimensional and seeks an illusion of actuality. Craig hinted at it when he wrote of his designs: "There is not a spot in them which could not be walked upon and lived in. Where I have introduced a pyramid, as in the design for *Cæsar and Cleopatra,* I have put it so far off that in nature no one would see the figures upon it. It is at such a distance that our imagination alone could people it—and our fancy runs up and down it with ease." Yes, it is still possible to use false perspective to indicate very distant objects; but only under certain conditions and never very successfully.

In any but a huge theatre such as we do not know in America, whatever mountain or far seacoast is painted into a setting must be painted upon some object not much over thirty feet behind the footlights. The eyes can and will report the difference between

the distance their vision actually has to go and the distance that the artist wishes them to believe it has gone, unless certain tricks of design and lighting are used to baffle them. One of these is, of course, light or the lack of it. By creating something of the haze of distance, either through fainter light upon the profile piece or the drop where the distant object is painted, or through the intervention of gauze, the eyes may be tricked into more or less ignoring the thing painted and letting it fall into its proper place. Another trick and a better trick is design. Lee Simonson has practiced this frequently on the small stage of the Garrick Theatre in his productions for the New York Theatre Guild. He has found that not only will gauze and dim lights throw a painted object back out of the foreground, but that placing the object so that it must be seen through the frame of some part of the main setting—as through a telescope—aids still more. Thus in *The Power of Darkness* he got the illusion of a distant field by forcing the audience to gaze at it through a deeply shadowed doorway. In the dim last act of *The Treasure* he diminished the size of the gravestones as they fell away over a little knoll and then materially increased the illusion by the half-circle of iron above the gate to the cemetery. His most successful illusion came in the scene by the railroad embankment in *Liliom*. There he gave us a glimpse of distant factory chimneys silhouetted against the sky

From The Theatre Arts Magazine.

LILIOM—SETTING BY SIMONSON

As staged by the New York Theatre Guild from the design by Lee Simonson, this scene demonstrates the possibility of utilizing false perspective if "thrown back" by an arch or frame and seen in dim light.

(another excellent trick) and pushed still further back by the heavy stone arch under which we had to peer to see them. In the park scene of *Liliom* Simonson achieved distance through the use of dim light and an irregularly transparent drop curtain lit from behind—a device first developed by Munroe Hewlitt.

All this account of the insistence of the new artist on genuine three-dimensional objects and of devices that may momentarily fool the eye, sounds on the surface rather like an argument for realism upon the stage. It is certainly an argument against the bastard pretenses of the old two-dimensional theatre; and without a three-dimensional stage realism is literally impossible. Yet at heart, it is, I think, a technical matter which does not necessarily touch the problem of what purposes it serves. The realist needed a three-dimensional stage in order to achieve that surface appearance of everyday life at which he aimed. The idealist, the poet or whatever you may care to call the dramatist who is seeking truth rather than fidelity, the inner meaning rather than the outward form, needed to get rid of pretenses. He wanted not realism but reality, not a new pretense but actuality. He felt at the beginning the falseness of the old stage. He preferred a technique which sought the ends of beauty and expressiveness, not of trickery. He could not tolerate devices that set the audience thinking of other things than the meaning of the play. The actor must always be the centre

and expression of the action; all that appeared upon the stage had to be put into harmony with him. This banished perspective from the theatre of inner truth quite as much as from the theatre of realism.

Now that the artists have achieved this actuality, this plastic stage, this architectural setting, have they reached the end? Have they got the perfect instrument for expression? Unquestionably, no. They have pared off the glaring faults of a fumbling method of production and they have added much that increases its scope. But in one respect at least they have pared off more than they have added. The three-dimensional stage in its most perfect and complete form means fundamentally that nothing shall be shown us within the proscenium that is larger than the actual backstage space in the theatre. We shall be given pieces of architecture to look at which are no greater than the average small ball-room. Unless our theatre has a plaster dome, and can achieve the glorious illusion of the heavens, we have no path of escape from the restrictions of forty-foot actuality. It does the artist little good if, like Norman-Bel Geddes, he opens up the whole proscenium arch. He will merely reach a larger actuality, a new boundary of the restriction.

These restrictions can be minimized, of course, by the ingenuity and imagination of a great artist. His line can achieve spiritual tangents. By suggestion he can lead our eye from a single Gothic pillar to a whole

soaring cathedral. Yet it is inevitable that the artist must revolt today from the physical and spiritual restrictions of the plastic theatre as he revolts from the physical and spiritual restrictions of the representative easel canvas. He will strive to free himself from the necessity of creating actuality in order to suggest the spiritual. He will seek for purer form. He will strive for clearer emotion. He will seek the expression of the spiritual by the most direct means.

Having denied pretense and achieved actuality, the artist of today is turning more and more away from the peep-show stage and its picture frame towards a new theatre. It is a theatre of an inner actuality instead of an outer, an actuality of form instead of an actuality of fact. The artist turns from the plastic stage to the formal. —

CHAPTER VIII.

EXPRESSIONISM IN THE THEATRE.

THE two-dimensional stage of Victorianism was damned by pretense even when artists of the calibre of Leon Bakst accepted and worked in it. The three-dimensional stage, which Gordon Craig and Adolphe Appia forced upon our theatre by their theories against perspective and in favor of harmonizing the actor with the setting, is always in danger of rising no higher than a sort of illusionism, removed through beauty one degree from realism. On such a stage appears only the solid, the real, the thing that could exist physically within the stage space. It is true that what Shaw's dying Dudebat calls "the might of design, the mystery of color" can give this plastic setting spiritual significance; yet there are relative limits to its freedom and ease of expression. Furthermore the plastic stage, bounded by the old proscenium frame, remains a reminder of a theatre of limited vision, a theatre that is, at its best, perilously close to the photographic. During much of the history of the new stagecraft artists and producers have sought to avoid the dangers and limits of representation without

PETRUSHKA—DESIGN BY BENOIS

The bizarre and sinisterly comic pantomime of Stravinsky in settings by the first art director of Diagileff's Ballets Russes which reflect its spirit. The second scene.

slipping back into the barren pretenses of two-dimensional scene-painting within a three-dimensional frame. They have sought this through emphasis on form in the materials employed. They have tried to introduce structural formality into the playhouse, and latterly they have turned to what might best be described as expressional formality in scenic design. That is, they have introduced new conventional forms and structures upon the stage in place of the conventional forms of backdrop and wings or the solid illusionist setting, and they have begun to paint and build in forms that may be called cubist and futurist, or expressionist. Let us consider expressionism first, since it can be, and too often is, presented amid the surroundings of the older theatre and without the spiritual support which it might win from association with a new form of stage.

A simple and rough analysis of the latest tendencies in scenic design and theories of production points a parallel with the history of modern painting. Just as the modern artist has sought to escape from the representative into the more or less abstract, and has given up the technique of Rembrandt, Velasquez, and Millet for the technique of Matisse, Picasso or Duchamps, in the same way the artist of the theatre has passed from realism, even from a beautiful and imaginative illusion of reality, to a formal method which tries to create sharper spiritual values by paring away the elements

that bind us most closely to the physical in life and the familiar in the theatre. The actor remains, and must remain; but all about him the artists place taboos against the ideas and emotions which we are used to associating with him, signs and wonders to arouse us to an acceptance of something fresh which he has to give.

Expressionism entered our theatre before it knew itself as expressionism. The term is a convenient blanket designed to cover all those methods in modern painting which substitute the formal expression of the artist's emotion for a representation of the object that may have aroused it. It includes cubism, vorticism, and those portions of futurism and post-impressionism which do not aim too directly at representation. In the older forms of painting the object of the artist was usually either representation or else the expression of an emotion caused by the object represented. In impressionism the subjective attitude of the artist entered a little more consciously and fully into the work. He painted the impression that the object made on him emotionally, rather than the literal reality of the object. In expressionism he may still paint a natural object, though often the picture is merely an arrangement of planes, masses or lines of color; but he tries to express through the object or the abstract shapes an emotion which he feels in himself. He tries to express his own emotion, not an outside reality, and this emo-

tion may be aroused by the object he pictures or by something altogether apart. Summed up, the expressionist attempts to express his emotion through pictorial means independent of the physical reality of the object pictured or its spiritual impression.

Obviously the effort to make a natural object or an abstract shape express a sensation which is not felt or suggested through it, but which is present in the artist has a most direct application to the scenic problem. For upon the stage we must have either natural objects, such as a door, or abstract shapes, such as a wall, a platform, or a draped hanging; and in the theatre we have an audience which is to feel an emotion that is present not in the objects *per se,* but in the creative mind of the dramatist and through him in the mind of the actor and the artist. It is the business of the stage designer to express this emotion by shaping these objects upon the stage into significant forms. He must not and he cannot find an emotion in a door. He must paint or carve an emotion into it. If he can paint or carve that emotion better through a triangular gap in a wall or through a series of distorted Gothic openings in a screen, then it is his business to paint or carve it so. It is only necessary that he should do it with such precision and power as to make the observer feel what he, the creator, has felt.

Before this process could be spoken of as expressionism, when it was known only by its outward technique

and called cubism, futurism, or post-impressionism, the first consistent attempts at its application to the stage were made in Moscow by the Kamerny Theatre, beginning on Christmas Day, 1914. The history of this remarkable little theatre, and of the work that its director, Alexander Tairoff, its chief actress, Alice Georgievna Koonen, and its various artists have done is to be found in Oliver M. Sayler's *Russian Theatre Under the Revolution.* Most of the productions, *Salome, The Merry Wives of Windsor, King Harlequin* and *Thamira of the Cithern,* have been mounted against cubist backgrounds and costumed and acted with a similar effect of angularity and mass. Beginning with cubism in the flat—drops, wings and walls painted with distorted planes and masses—the theatre has gradually developed to plastic cubism, to cubism applied in all three dimensions. Among the artists of the Kamerny are Sudeykin, Kuznetsoff, Kalmakoff, Lyentuloff, Miganadzhian, and Natalia Gontcharova, the last an artist who has applied the same theories in perhaps less degree to work for the Ballets Russes.

In the productions described by Sayler it is interesting to note how often he speaks of the light changing in color or intensity at some dramatic moment of the action, without any relation to natural causes. Offhand no one would be likely to classify an arbitrary and abstract handling of stage light with expressionism; for the expressionist canvases have known no other

SOLDIERS FROM A CUBIST SALOME

A group from the production of Oscar Wilde's tragedy at the Kamerny Theatre, Moscow, in 1917. Not only in the design of the costumes, but also in the posing of the figures, the artist and the director, Alexandra Exter and Alexander Tairoff, have striven to express the atmosphere of the play.

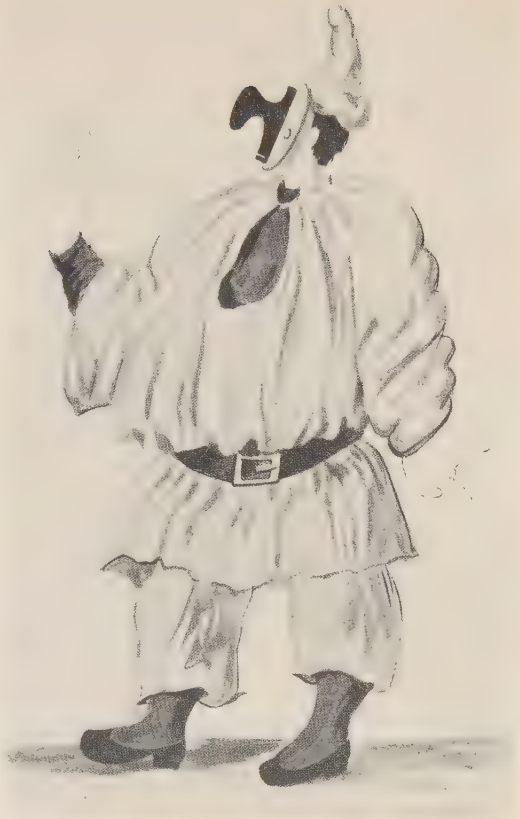
than their own painted light and the steady illumination of the picture galleries. Yet such treatment of illumination enters inevitably into these cubist productions in Moscow, and forms the basis for the theory of Achille Ricciardi's Theatre of Color in Rome, wherein Prampolini and other cubists worked. Light was handled in this fashion by Maurice Browne in *Medea* at Chicago in 1916-17 and by Dalcroze even earlier.

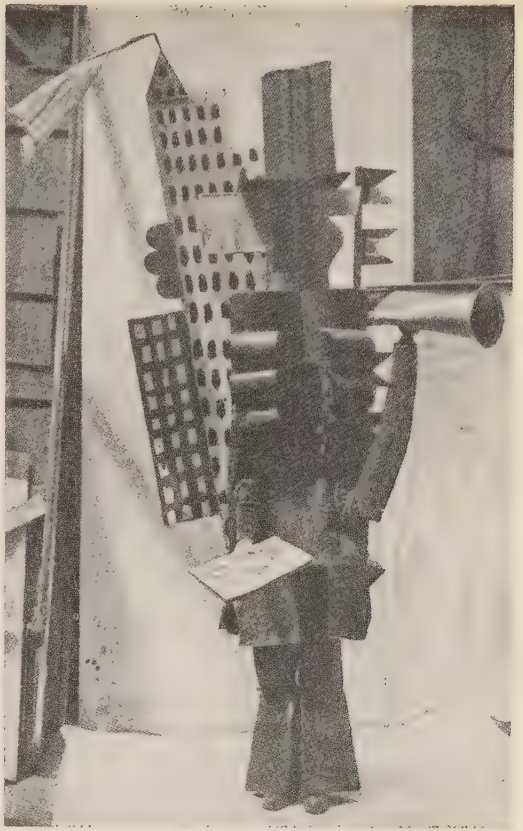
Before Appia's *Die Musik und die Inscenierung* was published practically no sound thought had been given to stage lighting—partly, no doubt, because controllable electric light was still very young in the theatre. In practice little had been done with this very important factor in stage production up to four or five years ago. Light is now rushing ahead to a place of first importance in the practice and the theory of the theatre, and is undergoing as radical a handling as any other factor in production.

Probably the first unorthodox use of light in New York—aside from the abandonment or modification of the footlights—occurred in the productions of Arthur Hopkins, beginning with *Redemption,* in which Robert Edmond Jones treated the light as a part of his design and not as proceeding from a natural source. In the second scene of Tolstoy's play, for instance, he plunged one side of the gypsies' room in a rich and mysterious dusk and, in contrast, bathed the coach on which Fedya lay in a glorious flood of amber light

coming from somewhere in midair. In *The Jest* Genevra's room was patterned in colored lights that caught and enlivened bits of bright silk and drapery. In all Jones's work he makes no attempt to solve that knotty problem of making stage light seemingly come from a natural source. He simply omits the source altogether.

This goes only a little way along the path of a radical handling of stage light, for Jones's light is static. It does not change as emotions change upon the stage. Here is where the Kamerny Theatre and Browne and Ricciardi depart in originality. Ricciardi gave an experimental season of plays by Maeterlinck, D'Annunzio, de Musset and himself during two weeks of March, 1920, at a theatre in Rome, playing a drama of changing light upon the drama of the play. Maurice Browne applied the same idea to Euripides in his production of *Medea* in Chicago and in New York. Unfortunately Browne's experiment suffered from an inferior lighting equipment, and also from an imperfect working out of the problem involved in applying utterly unnatural light to the actors of a play. Salzmann achieved more subtle changes in his work with Dalcroze and Appia at Hellerau. Obviously the possibilities of coloring an audience's emotions by coloring its vision are great, but since theatregoers are far more used to fixed and "natural" qualities in light than in any other element of life that may be transported to





EXPRESSIONIST COSTUMES BY PICASSO

At the left, Puncinella in an extraordinary mask from a like-named production of the Ballets Russes. At the right, a character from *Parade,* another Diagileff production; perhaps the most advanced attempt yet made in costume design.

the stage, dynamic and arbitrary stage lighting must be calculated with extreme nicety to reinforce the attention without distracting it.

A year later than the inception of the Kamerny Theatre came the first cubist production ever given in a public playhouse in America. In December, 1915, the Philadelphia Stage Society, which had made use of the rich talent to be found among the many young artists of the Academy of Fine Arts, displayed at the Little Theatre as background to an eccentric drama of Spain, *Three Women* by Richard J. Beamish, a bizarre interpretation of Seville painted by Morton L. Schamberg. This youthful cubist, who died during the war, went back to the flat backdrop of mid-Victorianism and spread across it the warm violence of the Spanish city in angular piles of reds, browns and yellows, with a bit of blue sky shattered by a leaping arch of Moorish shape.

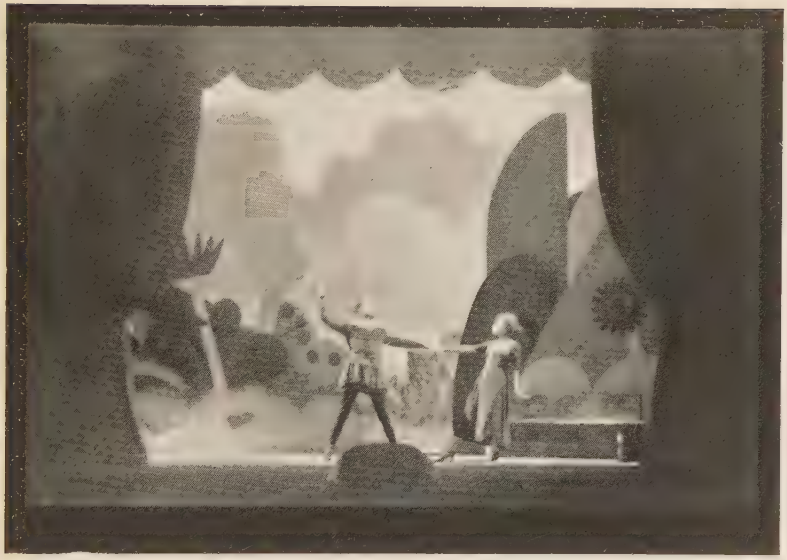
In February, 1917, came a still more interesting experiment in the expressionist method, again in Philadelphia. This was the production of the annual Artists' Masque by the Academy students with backgrounds of a generally expressionistic nature designed by another radical young painter, the late Lyman Sayen. Curiously enough, the scenario selected, the work of William A. Young, a lighting expert, originally called for a still more remarkable method of production. There was to be painted color in neither

setting nor costumes. The draped cyclorama and the simple clothes of the dancers were to be dyed by lights in agreement with the emotions of this masque, which developed the relation of color and shape to the spiritual life.

The next American experiment of which I am aware was Herman Rosse's production of a nativity play in Chicago in 1919, utilizing cubist elements in the design of a curtain symbolizing Herod and projecting at least one complete scene upon a neutral background by means of light passing through a glass plate upon which the design was painted.

The Ballets Russes of Sergei Diagileff—a pioneer even when applying the genius of such men as Bakst, Golovin and Roerich to the old mechanism of backdrops and flats—has utilized notably the art of such established modernists as Picasso, Matisse, Larionoff and Derain. Perhaps the most notable achievement of this group has been Picasso's extraordinary designs for costumes and figures for *Parade,* with various characters represented by strange towering agglomerations of cylinders, pipings and machine-like appendages.

The Royal Opera in Stockholm, under the ægis of its active and daring young director, Harald Andrée, has presented with more success than has graced any other expressionist production outside those of the Ballets Russes, a performance of Saint-Saëns' opera *Sam-*



From Theatre-Craft, London.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING—EXPRESSIONIST STYLE

A scene from the production of Shakespeare's comedy at the Residenz Theater in Munich following the armistice. The design by Fritz Schaefler is brilliant in color and bizarrely amusing in form.

son et Delilah against a thoroughly radical background designed by Isaac Grünewald.

Conscious and mature expressionism entered the playhouse in Berlin through experimental matinees given during the summer of 1920 by the artists grouped under the name of "Der Sturm." Here the artists went a step further through having plays to work upon that had been especially written for their purposes by Kokoschka, Hasenclever and others. Again there was dynamic light, arbitrarily changing, and also scenery as dramatic in movement as in design.

Milder forms of expressionism aiming at a bare simplification of the stage in contrast with one or two powerfully designed objects appear at present to rule the German theatre. In former royal playhouses *Richard III* is done on a flight of blood-red steps, and *Much Ado About Nothing* rejoices in bizarre trees and gay eccentric furniture.

Only two examples of German expressionist staging have established themselves firmly enough for export, and these through the motion picture. One is the bizarre and exciting film, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari,* made under the direction of Robert Wiene of the Sturm group; the other, *The Golem,* a mediæval legend with a background built from designs by Hanz Poelzig, the architect of Max Reinhardt's huge theatre, the Grosses Schauspielhaus. In *Caligari* expressionism was applied to painted flats, out of which were built

towns with houses that seemed about to topple into the streets. In *The Golem* expressionism was applied in the round, so to speak; plastic forms were bent and distorted to wring from them strange and ancient emotions. In *Caligari* the settings reinforced the racing and fantastic mystery of this story of a madhouse; the violent lines of paths and bridges produced an extraordinary sense of rapid and distraught motion in the bizarre figures of the film. In *The Golem* the arbitrarily twisted Gothic forms conveyed a sense of dreary decrepitude, of "houses that talk a Jewish jargon and hovels that whisper."

Scenery that shall act, that shall actually move, change, take part in the action of the play has been conceived by others than the expressionists of "Der Sturm." In Yevreynoff's theory of monodrama, which requires everything, plot, characters and setting, to be seen as through the eyes of the principal person of the play, there is inherent the conception of the background's changing as the mood of the protagonist changes. Herman Rosse, the Dutch decorator who has made America his home, has worked and thought much upon evolving moving scenery.

Rosse's conception creates virtually a new theatre and a new art. He has planned to place within the proscenium, upon drops, curtains or gauzes, an illusion of moving scenery, partly accomplished through varying lights and moving materials, and partly

From The Theatre Arts Magazine.

CALIGARI—EXPRESSIONISM ON THE SCREEN

Above, the fantastic and oppressive town of the German film, with the walls of its houses toppling inward upon the streets. Below, the sinister sleepwalker of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* drawn through the garden towards the gate of the heroine's home.

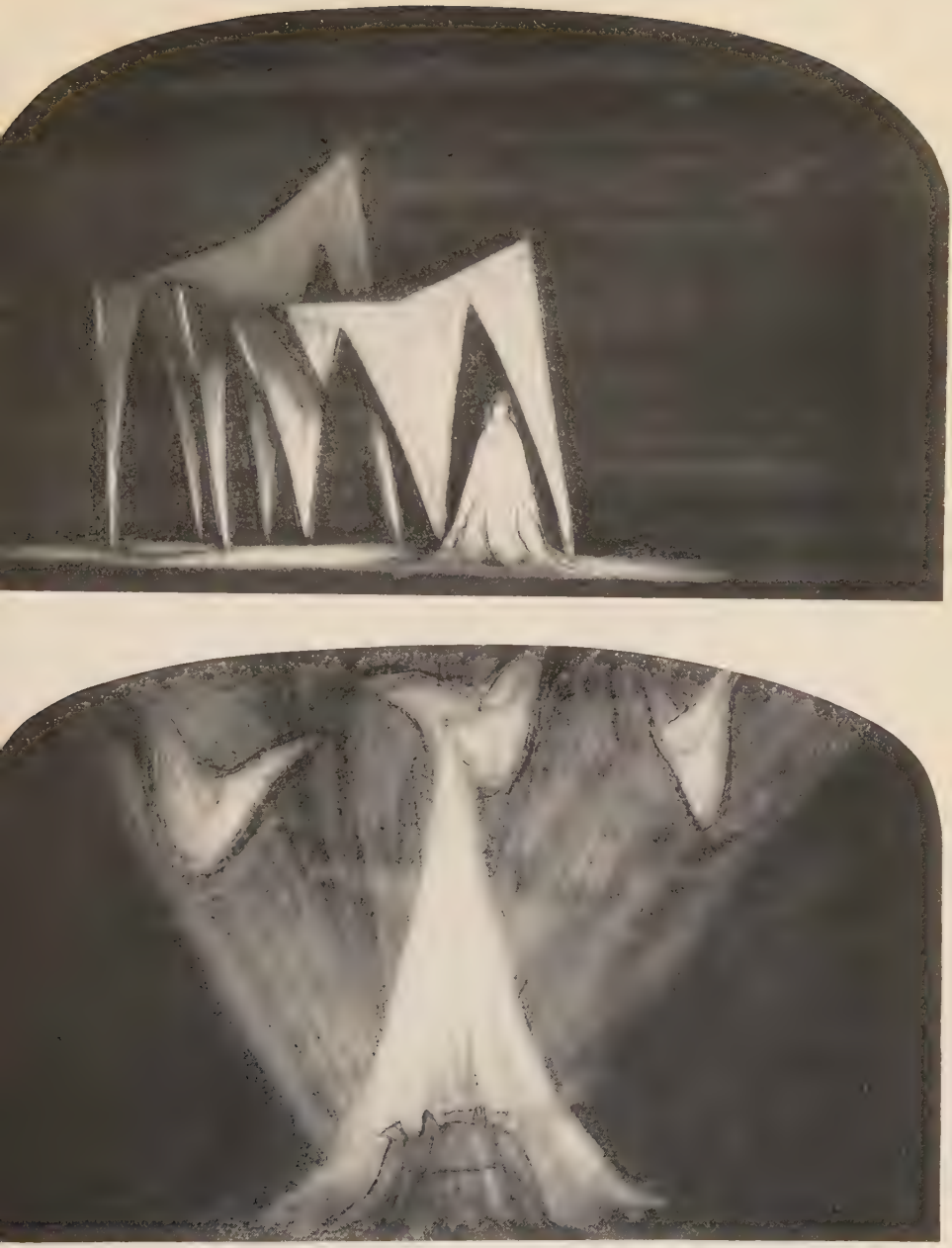
through designs projected on these surfaces by the motion picture machine. Through thousands of drawings—made and photographed much after the manner of the animated cartoons of the movies—he would create an absolutely living and dynamic background. This background would necessarily out-act the actors, but such a method of production is intended only for an entertainment in which story, action, color, music, pantomime and voice would be fused to create a new type of continuous emotional spectacle.

This is such work as the Ballets Russes has given us, pushed to the last degree of completion. The Diagileff Ballet, Rosse points out, has added to the motion of the actors and the rhythm of the music a motionless representation, on the backdrop, of the vivid dynamic emotion of the ballet. There has always been something of a conflict between the moving, living occupants of the stage and the static background. Rosse proposes to bring the scenery to life.

Carried to its logical conclusion, this means the elimination of the actor as the primary factor in the theatre. This is the accusation made against the newer designers in all their work. Rosse accepts it frankly in the case of the particular variety of vivid and emotional entertainment which has most readily utilized these artists' talents. He thus writes of the product: "From a purely æsthetic viewpoint the effect of this developing of the background at the expense of the actor will

remake the dynamic play. Imagine beyond the proscenium a void in which planes and bodies will develop themselves in limitless graduations of color and shape in one great rhythm with the coördinating music —two-dimensional patterns in kaleidoscopic succession, and these fascinating patterns formed by the intersection of solids, darts of color across a sombre background, lines, planes, or solids, and symbols of man and surrounding nature, all emphasizing the mood of the music!"

Curiously enough, the very thing which Rosse describes in settings has been achieved by another artist, not as the triumph of the artificial, the decorative, the stylistic theatre, but as a separate art, an art of pure color and form, an art as distinct as the art of pure sound and sequence which we call music. In a laboratory on Long Island, Thomas Wilfred, a naturalized Dane who is a machinist and a musician as well as artist, has perfected a "color organ" or "claviluse" which creates upon a plaster screen the most extraordinary, beautiful and moving progression of absolute shapes and colors. Upon a surface stained by light, develop, evolve and pass the most lovely and thrilling of bright shapes produced apparently by prisms and crystals. These figures—which have all the absolute rightness of the forms from which they spring—sweep slowly and majestically upward, turn in upon themselves like crystal veilings moved by mysterious and



rom The Theatre Arts Magazine.

MACBETH—DESIGNS BY ROBERT EDMOND JONES

Above, the letter scene at Dunsinane as sketched for the expressionistic production by Arthur **opkins**. Below, the caldron scene, with masks signifying the unearthly forces.

heavenly winds. Floating in three-dimensional space —for the effect of solidity is astonishing in these transparent objects—they seem to turn inside-out into a fourth. The final effect is utterly apart from the theatre as we know it. It is more of some mystic philosophy of shapes and numbers, come to life, a religion of pure form sprung out of the void.

There was for me this same mystic quality in the only attempt that Americans have made upon Broadway in applying the principles of expressionism to the stage—the production of *Macbeth* by Arthur Hopkins in the spring of 1921 with settings by Robert Edmond Jones.

Throughout, Jones attempted by significant form to create an abstract background expressing the spiritual relationships of the play. He saw as the dominant element of *Macbeth* the abnormal influence of the powers symbolized by Shakespeare in the witches. He tried to visualize the superhuman nature of these mystic forces in gigantic masks appearing high in the air above the blasted heath. Through the rest of the play he placed upon the stage very simple and abstract forms to carry the mood induced by the supernatural influences which seize and dominate the characters constantly throughout *Macbeth*. These bits of settings were, to him, things projected by the masked forces upon the action of the play.

The short scenes, mainly of a narrative nature, which pass elsewhere than at Inverness or Dunsinane, were

acted at the front of the stage against a draped curtain of canvas falling in stiff folds—a curtain of dully burnished gold which took the lights in uncommonly beautiful ways. The main portions of the drama, the more important portions, were acted upon a deep stage surrounded by dimly seen black hangings. For the first scene of the witches there were only the three silver masks hanging above and three similarly masked figures in red standing motionless in a pool of light below. For most of the scenes in Inverness, Jones used one or two sets of arches, curiously and disturbingly aslant. These developed in dramatic force as the course of the play altered. When Macbeth reached the highest point of his success the two groups seemed to lunge forward and away toward triumph. In the last scenes, when he heard of the coming of Birnam wood, only one set of arches remained and it seemed almost toppling to the ground. Other abstract shapes were handled similarly. For the sleep-walking scene there were a series of arched window frames set about the stage, through which and against which Lady Macbeth appeared. The throne of the banquet scene was backed crazily by brooding and malignant shapes. All these elements were handled in the barest and simplest grays, with an occasional dull red like the backing of the throne. These were lit by sharp beams of light that came, as it were, from the spirits in the void and made patterns of the air. The dominating shapes

PULCINELLA—DESIGN BY PICASSO

Expressionist setting for a dance-drama presented by Diagileff's Ballets Russes.

of the bits of setting created in a sensitive spectator a sensation of terrible, overpowering obsession. These were shapes that suggested not realities but unconscious forces. The characteristic form employed was the distorted Gothic arch. Repeated in shields, conical helmets and spears, it was like the dull point of a murderous dagger. Twisted as it was, it impressed upon the mind the deadly and thwarted ambition with which the sisters obsess Macbeth. Here was scenery attempting to suggest an emotional idea, instead of a physical reality.

Even without the impossibly dull performance of Lionel Barrymore as Macbeth the production could not have achieved its fullest success. I feel that Jones erred in not keeping the supernatural forces of the heath constantly before us, in not subordinating the actual witches to the symbols in the air, and then in not keeping the masks brooding visibly above all the scenes that followed. I think also that he impaired his effect by setting these objects blankly upon the stage of an ordinary playhouse. He needed, first of all, platforms or levels on which to display his significant arches and to give them greater dignity, and he needed, above all, another frame than the proscenium to hold them.

Such experiments as those of Jones and others who work in expressionist forms require playhouses suited more sympathetically to their purposes than our houses

where we are used to expecting representational productions. Their attempts to introduce expressionism will encounter very grave difficulties until our theatre, its stages and its auditoriums are virtually made over. They must aid us in our escape from representation. The old-fashioned proscenium must go. Forestages and portals, or entrances in the walls of the auditorium, must be introduced. The audience must give up at least a part of the orchestra to the players. Such reforms are necessary to the expressionist designers. They tear us away from the familiar expectations and ideas aroused by the gilded picture frame of the nineteenth century theatre. We can be ready for fresh relationships, visual and articulate, only in a fresh playhouse among fresh surroundings. Fortunately an impulse akin to the expressionist's has been preparing the way to such a playhouse in the physical reforms made during the past fifteen years in the auditorium and upon the stage of the German theatre.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FORMAL STAGE.

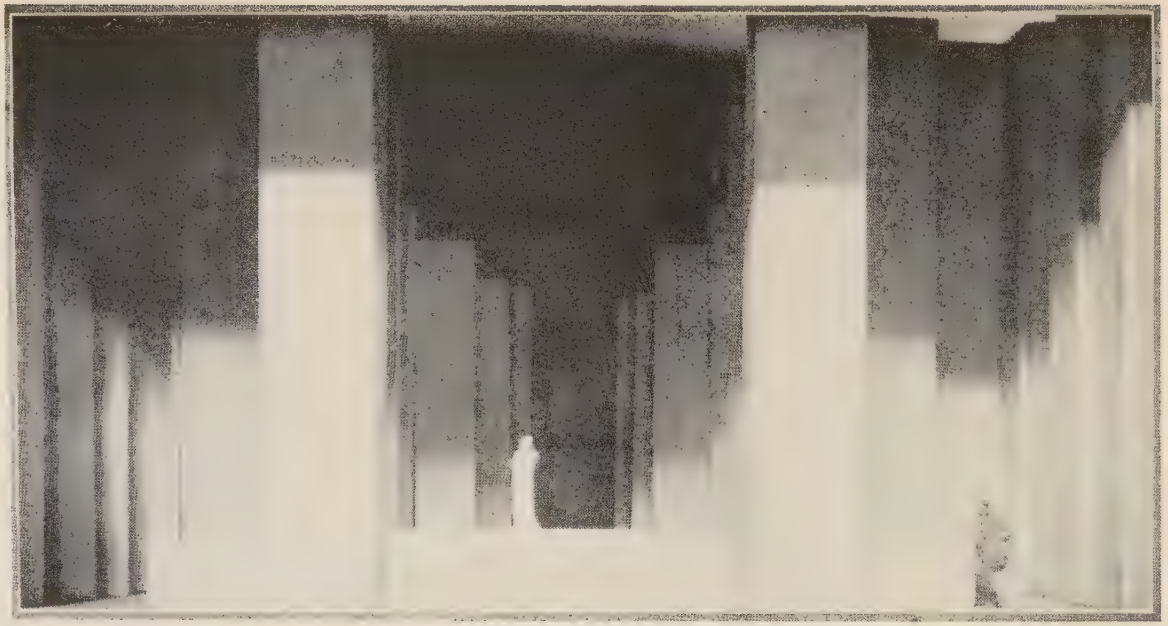
BEFORE expressionism in scenic design showed the artist a way of escape from the physical and spiritual limitations of the plastic stage, where all seemed as solid as reality, and not much larger in size or in meaning, he had begun to study the possibilities of introducing structural form into both the setting and its stage. He tried what could be done in reducing the setting to a formal arrangement of more or less permanent materials, and by abolishing or radically altering the proscenium he attempted to unite the stage and the auditorium in a single architectural whole.

The problem of formalizing the setting and producing at the same time an economical and practically permanent scenic equipment for a theatre arrested Gordon Craig some ten years ago and resulted in the invention of his screen settings which were used by the Moscow Art Theater in its production of *Hamlet* in 1912. Craig, who has always liked to use massed walls, high towers, large abstract surfaces, hit upon the scheme of building his scenes from screens of many folds and

various sizes, all neutral in color, and easily arranged in an infinite variety of shapes. Thus a screen of wide folds could be bent at a right angle or prolonged off stage to form the wall of a building, or a screen of narrow sections could simulate a curved wall by being bent only slightly at each hinge. Upon the surfaces of the screens, the stage light could produce many and fascinating degrees of tone, and, of course, any desired colors. Out of a set of screens, properly arranged and lighted, a theatre could achieve almost any setting within the limits of the statuesque and noble. Also they permitted the director or artist handling them to express his own ideas in form. At least this was true of Craig's model.

The experiment of actual production with *Hamlet* was hardly successful, for two reasons: in spite of every effort on the part of the theatre, the fullest coöperation of the artist was not secured; further the units, which in the model were used in different arrangements for various scenes and for various plays, proved awkward to handle upon the stage; many of the screens were built especially for each scene in *Hamlet* and none of them was utilized, as it should have been according to the Craig theory, for other productions.

In spite of the failure of Craig's screen settings to reach practical use, they have set him definitely in the ranks of those who are not content with the plastic or



From Towards a New Theatre.

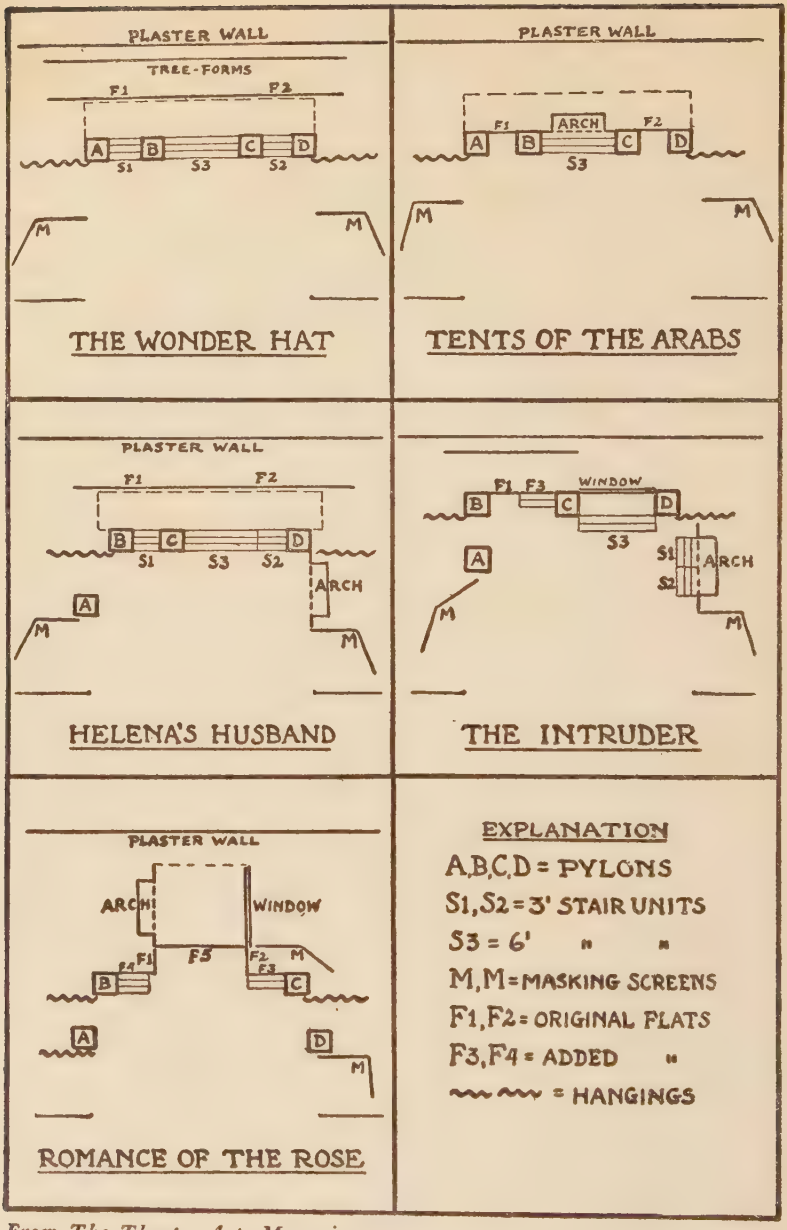
HAMLET IN CRAIG'S SCREENS

A photograph of a model showing an arrangement of the system of folding screens out of which the various scenes of *Hamlet* were to be made for the production of the play under Gordon Craig's supervision at the Moscow Art Theatre in 1912.

representational stage and who seek formal means of solving the problem of the stage setting.

The most successful permanent, formal and adaptable setting of which I know, and the only one used in America, was an outgrowth of Craig's experiments with his screens. One of his pupils, Sam Hume, now director of the Greek Theatre of the University of California, devised a mechanism of pilons and draperies, which, together with steps and occasional flats and arches, he used with great success in the productions of the Arts and Crafts Theatre in Detroit, of which he was director from 1916 to 1918. It has been described and pictured by Sheldon Cheney in *The Art Theatre* and in *The Theatre Arts Magazine.* During the first year, nineteen plays were given calling for twenty scenes. Eleven of these were made from the permanent setting. "The range covered such widely differing requirements," says Cheney, "as the interior of a mediæval chateau for *The Intruder,* the Gates of Thalanna for *The Tents of the Arabs,* the wall of heaven for *The Glittering Gate,* and a Spartan palace for *Helena's Husband.*"

Somewhere between the truly permanent and formal setting and the ordinary stage picture is the "skeleton setting." This consists in carrying through a complete production the same general structure or skeleton, with parts modified or altered. Arches, walls or pillars stand throughout the play and are merely varied by



From The Theatre Arts Magazine.

FIVE SETTINGS IN ONE

Diagram of the arrangement of five scenes from Sam Hume's permanent and adaptable setting at the Arts and Crafts Theatre, Detroit.

From The Theatre Arts Magazine.

HUME'S ADAPTABLE SETTINGS

Two scenes from one-act plays as produced by Sam Hume at the Arts and Crafts Theatre in Detroit, from the units of his permanent setting. Above, *The Tents of the Arabs;* below, *The Wonder Hat.*

other smaller units introduced to give a particular and appropriate atmosphere to the various scenes. The device was first used in America, I think, by Joseph Urban in two acts of his production of *The Love of the Three Kings* at the Boston Opera House in 1913-14. Claude Bragdon designed an elaborate and ingenious setting of this sort for Walter Hampden's *Hamlet* in 1919. Robert Bergman, the remarkable craftsman who has painted with such high skill almost all the scenery made from the designs of the younger New York artists, adapted from Gémier a skeleton setting for *Spanish Love* when Wagenhals & Kemper produced that play in 1920-21. Sheldon K. Vielé used a skeleton setting most adroitly in the Theatre Guild's production of *The Cloister* in the spring of 1921.

It is seldom indeed that a playwright anticipates in his stage direction the possibilities of production along modern lines, especially these of a formal character which I am describing. A notable exception, however, is Masefield in his Japanese tragedy, *The Faithful.* In his note at the beginning, Masefield writes:

"This play is written to be played uninterruptedly, without more break in the action than is necessary to get the actors off the stage and to raise the screen or curtain dividing the scenes. There are only two scenes: one the front part of the stage, left quite bare, without decoration, but with a screen, set, or backcloth at the back, representing a Japanese landscape, with

hills and water, all wintry and severe; the other, the back of the stage, visible when this screen is lifted, a room in a Japanese palace, very beautiful, but bare save for a few flowers and a picture or two."

Lee Simonson's realization of this scheme when *The Faithful* was produced by the New York Theatre Guild in 1919-20 was not alone beautiful and moving in its design and color, but improved markedly upon the original idea by the use of actual screens (freshly designed, of course), which folded back out of sight during the use of the inner scene, instead of being hoisted like an ordinary curtain.

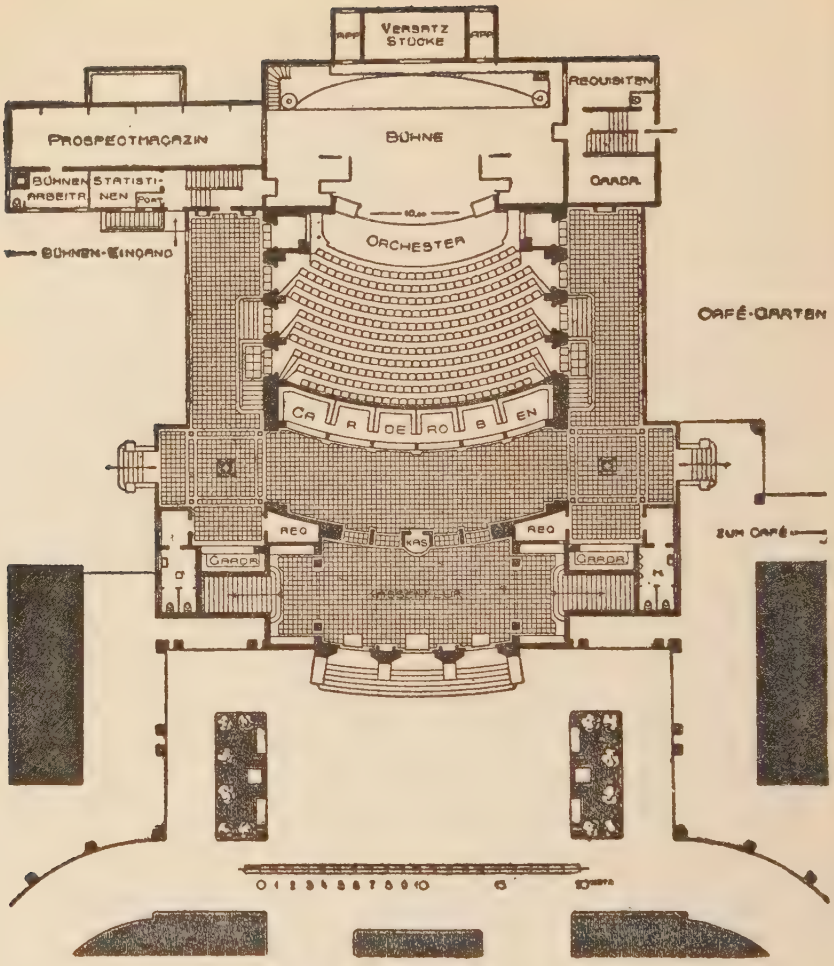
Decidedly the most interesting experiment in structural form made in America has been Robert Edmond Jones's production of *Richard III* as directed by Arthur Hopkins for John Barrymore in 1919-20. Here we had a permanent setting in one sense, yet not a setting that tried to simulate various places rather than itself. It was not a frame for inner scenes but rather an enveloping presence. Covering the back of the stage and circling into the wings was a portion of that dread old Tower of London in which the murders of Richard centred. This moldering gray threat remained throughout the play. It stood like the empty skull of Richard with the hideous drama within it. Certain scenes used this wall, its towers and its frowning gate frankly as the exterior of the Tower. For other scenes pieces of property were placed within it.

THE FAITHFUL—SCREEN SETTING BY SIMONSON

Masefield's stylized Japanese tragedy as produced by the New York Theatre Guild from designs by Lee Simonson.

But the wall remained throughout—or should have remained, if the artist's original conception had been more closely followed—a lowering presence. Thus for the prison of Henry VI there was an iron cage in the centre of the stage. For the prison where the princes were murdered Jones ran a grill from proscenium to proscenium, just back of where the curtain should fall. For the palace of York there was a small raised platform backed by an arras; in this scene, against the artist's desires, the walls of the tower were somewhat hidden by low hangings. Similarly darkness hid the tower during the scene on Bosworth Field, whereas Jones originally conceived the setting as a great gibbet outlined in fiery silhouette against the flame-lit Tower.

As actually produced, this *Richard III* became in certain scenes merely a trick production a grade below a permanent setting since it sought to disguise the common element rather than to gather strength and unity from it. As conceived and as used in most of its scenes, however, this remarkable setting moved far ahead in the history of production through the use of new structural form. Its prime virtue was that it found its form in the mind of the playwright, that it dramatized through its use of the Tower as a background the dominating mood of the play. It escaped from representation, it achieved a new and a true theatricalism—



From the Theatre Arts Magazine.

THE MUNICH KÜNSTLER THEATER

Georg Fuchs' playhouse and "relief stage." Note the inner proscenium, below and at the sides of the word "Bühne." At either side of the orchestra pit are portals such as the architect, Max Littmann, introduces into his proscenium in other houses. The seats continue up over the foyers.

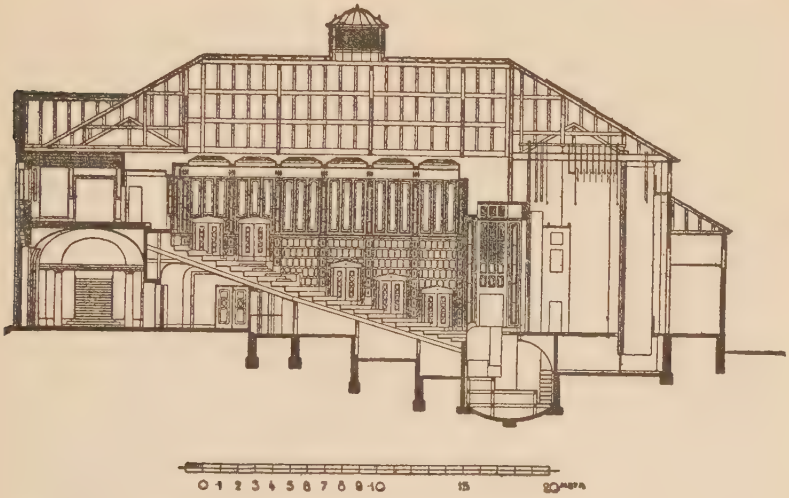
From The Theatre Arts Magazine.

RICHARD III—DESIGNS BY ROBERT E. JONES

For Arthur Hopkins' revival of the play with John Barrymore. In every scene appeared some part of the permanent background shown above, the Tower of London. Standing alone, it served for most street scenes and exteriors. Placed in front of it were simple indications of other settings. The lower sketch is for the last scene.

which has become more and more the object of the new stagecraft.

The most notable and successful experiment in a new structural form was brought forth in Munich in 1907 by Georg Fuchs, a director who must be placed



From The Theatre Arts Magazine.

CROSS-SECTION OF A LITTMANN THEATRE

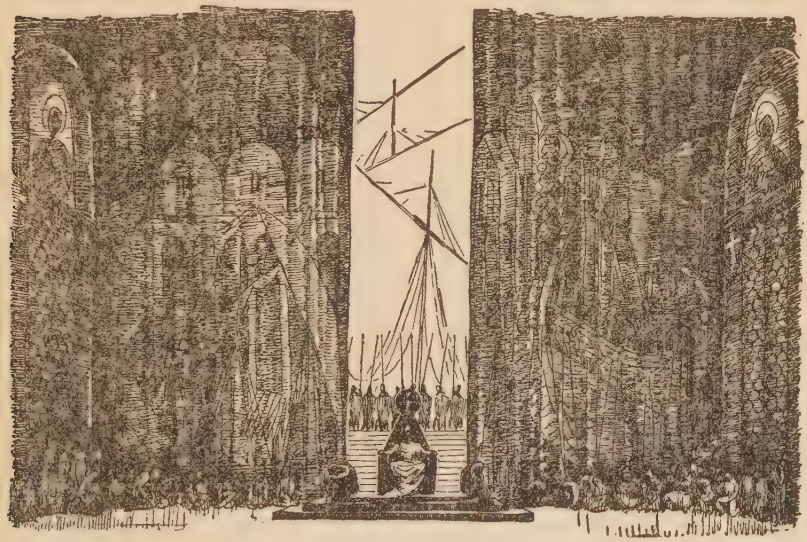
The Munich Künstler Theater, showing the sunken orchestra pit, which may be covered over to serve as forestage for the portals in the proscenium.

close to Craig and Appia as a theorist of the new theatre. Fuchs created the idea of the "relief stage" and embodied it in the Munich Künstler Theater, a remarkable playhouse and stage designed by that master of theatre architecture, Max Littmann. The relief stage is simply a method of emphasizing the actor by placing him close to the audience upon a shallow stage that

throws up his body in relief against a flat and very simple setting. The method is usually described as two-dimensional. In spite of the fact that Fuchs's artists frequently paint in perspective upon the curtain that makes the back of the shallow stage, this description is far from accurate. "Relief" as an artistic principle involves a third dimension. Whatever two-dimensional painting Fuchs uses is not employed as a pretense at three-dimensions, as it was in the old school of scene design. It is employed as the only easy and free means of handling exteriors, and the design is formalized as far as possible. For the bulk of his scenes, which are interiors, Fuchs employs very simple walls, with plastic moldings and real doors. The point of the whole thing is fundamentally the emphasizing of the actor as a three-dimensional object moving across simple, formal and more or less abstract settings. There is no representation, no illusion, even in the interiors, for side towers, forming an inner proscenium frame, continue through the whole play, patently visible and used as entrances and exits to the scene within.

It seems rather curious that Fuchs should never have employed a very simple device that is always available to avoid the appearance of returning to the two-dimensional representational stage. This device, utilized elsewhere in Germany and by Barker in his productions of Shakespearean plays both in London and during his season at Wallack's in New York, in 1914-15,

is simply the hanging of painted backdrops in many folds like curtains. Upon the canvas surface the artist paints freely, more freely in fact than if he were trying to produce a flat backdrop which should simulate reality in its perspective. The design may be worked out



LA NAVE—A DRAPED BACKGROUND

Canvas painted in perspective but hung in folds, instead of flat, may make over the old backdrop from pretense into frank decoration. Design by Norman-Bel Geddes; produced by Chicago Opera Co.

with a certain distortion in breadth, so that when it is hung in many folds the decoration assumes normal proportions. It remains, however, frankly a decoration, a thing summoning an emotion through its line and color, but never for a moment pretending to reality or illusion. Albert Rutherston painted the fantastic

jungle for *Androcles and the Lion* in this fashion, and Norman Wilkinson executed draped drops to shut off the forestage from the deeper stage in Barker's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

Perhaps the greatest impulse towards formalizing the stage in Germany has come from Shakespeare, from the desire of directors to present his plays as they were written, without cuts, in the natural order of their scenes and without waits for the shifting of scenes. Ludwig Tieck and Karl Immermann, working as long ago as 1840, did much to create the forestage and inner stage now familiar as the essential parts of Shakespeare's playhouse. Immermann's stage, with entrances at the sides and at the ends of the rear wall, as it appears in drawings of the period, is unusually graceful in proportions and—considering the lack of knowledge as to the actual mechanism of the Shakespeare stage — remarkably serviceable to its purpose. In 1889 under the stimulus of Perfall, director of the Royal Court Theatre, Munich began experiments towards a "Shakespeare Bühne," which, after enlisting the aid of Savitts and Lautenschläger, have ended in the admirable portals and inner stage of the new Court (now, I presume, State) Theatre so skilfully utilized by Julius V. Klein.

The Shakespearean stages evolved in Germany are not, of course, at all like the open-air bearpits of Elizabethan London. They may best be described

IMMERMANN'S SHAKESPEARE STAGE

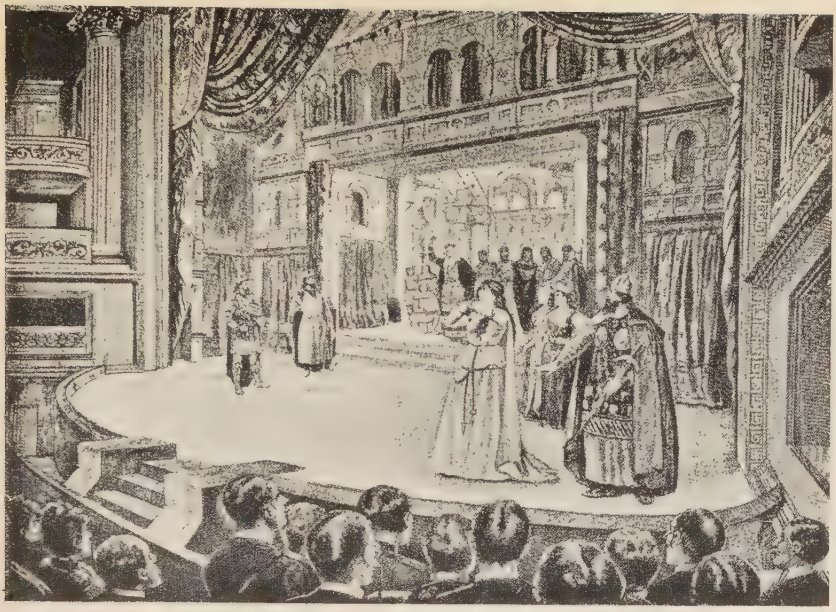
The first German attempt (1840) to provide a modern setting appropriate to Shakespeare's plays and founded on the nature of his own playhouse. The doors lead to various gardens, streets, etc. The small inner stage at the back could be shut off by a curtain and its setting quickly changed, while the action went on upon the forestage.

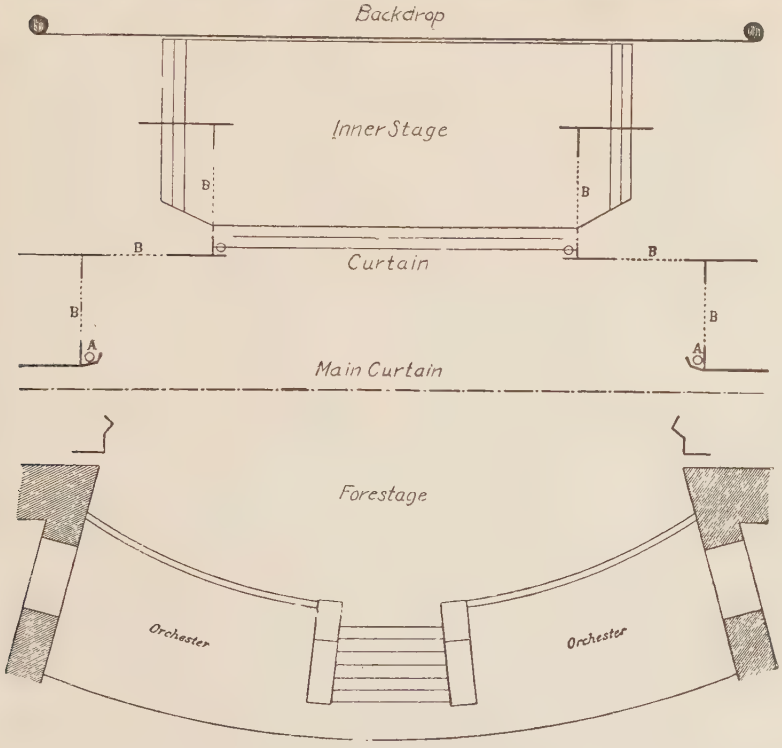
as stages like that of the Munich Künstler Theater, but with greater depth. In the base of the inner or false proscenium at each side there are portals or formal doors, perhaps with windows and balconies above. Between these portals lies a forestage, a portion of which would be hidden by the normal curtain of the theatre. Back of this forestage and the inner proscenium is a deeper stage which may be set in any fashion to indicate a room or an exterior. Scenes are played alternately upon the forestage and rear stage, the actors coming as close to the audience as the psychology of the scene dictates. While the actors are playing some front scene, the rear stage is being reset behind a curtain dropped within the inner proscenium. This curtain is usually painted in a color or design appropriate to the scene of the action in front. Carl Hagemann's "Ideal Stage" is a famous variant of this scheme.

This Shakespeare stage resulted from two desires on the part of its originators. They wished to secure rapid changes of settings in order to keep the short scenes of Shakespeare running swiftly and naturally, as he intended, an object which the forestage and rear stage accomplished even more successfully than a revolving stage or a sliding stage could have done. They also wished to approximate the relations between the audience and the actors on the apron of the Elizabethan theatres and between this apron and the recessed al-

cove behind the curtain which was used for certain scenes in Shakespeare. In working upon these problems they evolved a formal stage as thoroughly removed from our realistic or plastic stage as was the Elizabethan.

The mechanism of the German Shakespeare stages has been extensively adapted to other plays and other purposes. The portals and inner proscenium were introduced to America by Joseph Urban when he was artistic director of the Boston Opera House between 1912 and 1914. For *The Tales of Hoffmann* for *Don Giovanni,* even for the pseudo-realistic *Louise* he set up false prosceniums within the old ones—shallow walls at right angles to the footlights and curtain, pierced by doors and windows, and joined at the top by either a flat or a curved arch. The arch, incidentally, cut down the sight line from the front rows of the parquet, and permitted the abandonment of the canvas borders which were ordinarily necessary to hide the gridiron from view. The portals, standing throughout the play, formed a unifying link between the various scenes behind them, and also broke the contrast between the gold proscenium and the setting. They made the audience look at the stage in a new way and with a new feeling. When Urban took up designing for the *Ziegfeld Follies* he introduced the portals again, this time to simplify changes of scene, as in the Shakespeare stage, and to supply a deeper fore-





THE MUNICH SHAKESPEARE STAGE

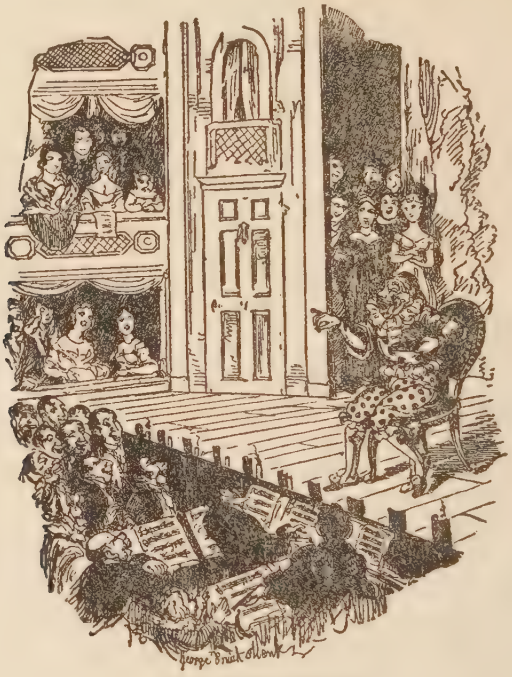
The architectural setting, inner stage and forestage devised by Savitts and Perfall in 1890, the forerunner of the Shakespeare stage of the former Munich Royal Court Theatre and of others elsewhere in Germany. Though the detail and the costuming shown above are banal and ugly, like much of the stage art of their period, the arrangement of the stage is ingenious and serviceable.

stage for songs and dances than the ordinary apron afforded. The inner proscenium, which practically becomes a permanent setting varied by the change of scene in the small stage-opening it presents, has been used now and again in serious productions in New York. Urban employed it in *Twelfth Night* for Phyllis Neilson-Terry. Rollo Peters used it in *The Bonds of Interest,* the first production of the Theatre Guild when he was its director, and in *The Prince and the Pauper,* for William Faversham. Lee Simonson devised a set with permanent portals and inner proscenium for *Pierre Patelin* in 1916. Stuart Walker used a special inner proscenium for his Portmanteau Theatre.

The most vital step in formalizing the stage and in altering the relation between actor and audience came when Max Littmann introduced the portals of the Shakespeare stage into the actual proscenium of the theatre. Instead of a gold frame separating the auditorium from the stage picture, we find a neutral wall pierced by a door, and often by a balcony above, uniting the auditorium with the stage itself.

It is curious to note that in this radical change in the purpose of the proscenium the Germans introduced a device which the English stage began to discard in 1800; and that both derived it from the Elizabethan stage. In Shakespeare's time there were always two entrance doors to the stage at each side of the inner scene. With the closing of the theatres through the

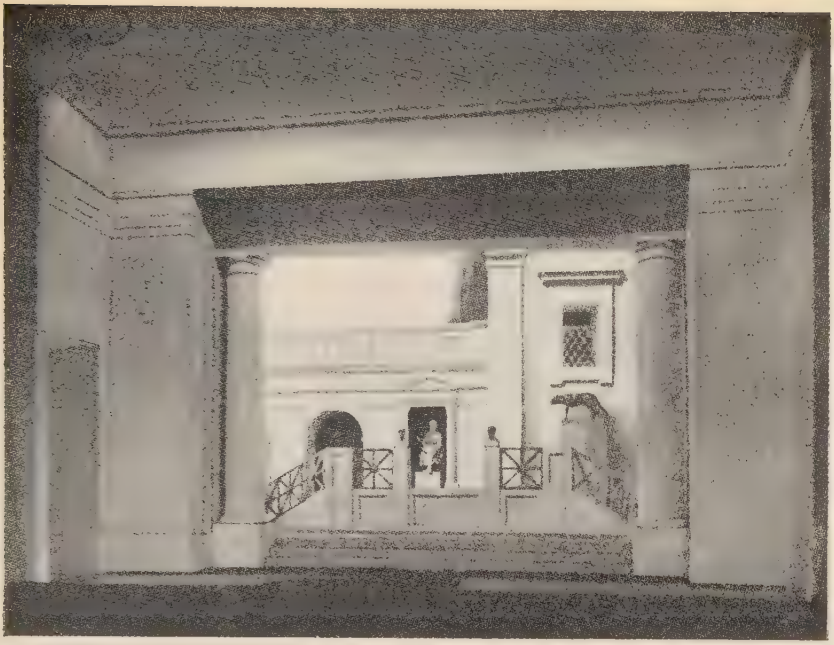
Puritan influence in 1641, the native English playhouse, derived in form from the old inns, virtually disappeared. When the ban was removed and in 1661



THE ENGLISH PORTALS

A Cruikshank drawing showing the portals or doorways in the proscenium, which were used in British theatres in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries and revived by the German reformer Littmann.

theatres were built once more, they borrowed their form from the Italian opera house and the French theatre—a form rather similar to that of our own opera houses if we add a deeper apron. One feature of the



SHAKESPEARE AT THE MUNICH ROYAL COURT THEATRE

The permanent setting devised by Julius V. Klein. The inner stage is reset for all the deeper scenes of the plays. Details of the inner proscenium and portals are changed to correspond in architectural quality with the period of each play. A classic play, *Julius Cæsar,* above; a renaissance play, *Hamlet,* below.

old Elizabethan playhouse was retained—at the behest of the actors. This was the pair of entrance doors. And now, naturally enough, they moved forward into the proscenium. Through these doors in the picture frame, the principal actors made their entrances and exits for a hundred and fifty years. It was not until the nineteenth century that sentiment against the "unreality" of this device was able to override the actors' natural allegiance to it. While Germans were busy on experiments which were to result in its reintroduction, the last of these proscenium doors closed in 1905 in the Adelphia Theatre, Liverpool.

England was right in attacking the proscenium door as distinctly opposed to realism. It is actually of an older and a newer theatre. As developed in Germany, this device ends by altering most severely the whole relation of the proscenium and the stage to the audience. Through its intercession we have an auditorium that merges gradually with the stage. Often the last of the doors along the side walls, which are used by the audience in reaching their seats, turn into other entrances to the forestage. The stage itself is, after all, only an extension of the floor of the auditorium, rising by a few steps to the higher level of the forestage and the inner scene.

Littmann, the most ingenious and philosophic of the German theatre architects, has spent much time upon the problem of the proper relations of such an audi-

torium and such a stage. He has worked out the harmonious relations of its parts and he has also devised methods of combining this intimate stage with the ordinary form of remote, framed picture still needed for realistic productions. His solution, which he arrived at fifteen years ago, he calls the variable proscenium. It is adaptable to three types of plays—realistic dramas or modern comedies, poetic pieces, and music-dramas. The heart of the device is a rather deep proscenium frame into which doors and windows may be let. For realistic plays or old-fashioned operas this frame is plain and unobtrusive; there is the ordinary gap of the orchestra pit between the audience and the footlights. When the house is to be used for Wagnerian music-drama, the walls of this proscenium frame come out and the orchestra pit is sunken and half-arched over by a sounding board, creating the "mystic abyss" between the auditorium and the stage which Wagner demanded. For Shakespearean and imaginative plays the walls of the proscenium are used with doors let in; the stage is extended out over the orchestra pit, making a forestage; steps lead down to the auditorium floor, where two or three rows of seats have been removed to make more playing space for the actors; finally, doors in the normal walls of the auditorium next to the proscenium are used for added entrances.

With this modification of the proscenium and its virtual abolition as a frame for the stage picture have

THE BONDS OF INTEREST—DESIGN BY PETERS

The permanent setting with inner proscenium and side entrances designed by Rollo Peters for the Theatre Guild's production of Benavente's play.

gone many experiments in mingling the audience and actors. In his big spectacles, *Œdipus Rex* and *The Miracle,* produced in buildings like Madison Square Garden, Reinhardt seated his audience round three sides of a space in the centre of the hall rather like the orchestra of a Greek theatre. He brought his mobs of actors into this space through runways under the audience, and thus made them appear suddenly at the spectators' very elbow. Reinhardt also brought his actors to the stage over the heads of the audience, as in *Sumurûn,* upon a runway leading from the back of the auditorium to the centre of the footlights, in palpable imitation of the "flower ways" of the Japanese theatres. This device, adapted to the intimate display of the chorus of our American musical shows, was to be seen in the New York Winter Garden.

The most thorough remaking of the relations of stage and auditorium which America has witnessed in its commercial theatre, came during 1920-21 when a firm of astute commercial managers saw far enough into the most advanced theories of the theatre to accept a scheme for making over the appeal of a rather commonplace melodrama called *Spanish Love* by making over the theatre in which it was presented. Virtually reproducing Gémier's production of the play in Paris, Wagenhals & Kemper put into a Broadway theatre almost every novel physical reform of the formal stage except expressionist scenery. They used a permanent

setting, with small portions changed to indicate the different localities in which successive acts passed. They took out the footlights and the orchestra pit and installed a forestage on a lower level than the main stage and with steps leading down to it at each end. They converted the first box on each side into an entrance to this forestage. They covered up what remained of the proscenium arch with hangings keyed to the Spanish atmosphere of the play. Finally they had the actors use the aisles as well as the boxes for entrances. So far as design and direction go, it was all an ill-considered and ill-executed attempt to make new methods of approach to the theatre, give a stuffy old play a counterfeit freshness and significance. The interesting point is that these new methods succeeded in doing just that. The public responded to them.

Obviously these attempts to escape from a plastic scene by formalizing the stage and the stage picture—whether they lie purely in an expressionist treatment of the setting or in the uniting of auditorium and stage by abolishing the gilded proscenium, or in both—mean a new relation of audience and play, a return to a fundamental attitude forgotten by the theatre in its years of realism and its seeking after illusion. It means the treating of the actor and the things about him as actual materials to call up emotions, not as things suggesting and representing other things. The theatre of the Greeks, the theatre of the mediæval church, the thea-

Courtesy of Shadowland MME. CHRYSANTHÈME—DESIGN BY ROSSE

The opera of Japanese life as set for the Chicago Opera Company, with an interesting use of an inner stage.

tre of the Elizabethans, showed us things that suggested emotion, not things that suggested other things that might in turn suggest emotion. In his difficult but keen volume, *The Path of the Modern Russian Stage,* Alexander Bakshy has supplied an excellent term for the complementary form to representation—presentation. This distinction between representation and presentation expresses the distinction between things upon the stage representing other objects than themselves—which is realism or illusionism—and things merely presenting themselves to the audience for what they actually are—objects displaying emotion in themselves. If we are actually embarked upon this transition from a representational to a presentational stage we must find evidence of it in the handling of the actor as well as in the handling of the setting.

CHAPTER X.

THE ACTOR RE-ANIMATED.

THE new stagecraft began with the problem of the setting. It ends in the problem of the actor. Every attempt to formalize scenery, every attempt to alter the shape of the building in which the play is given, means a new emphasis upon the actor. For him there must be a new technique as much as for the artist.

Such devices as I have described not only bring the audience into a new relation with the stage and the setting but also—and this is much more important—into a new relation with the actor. They signalize the invasion of the theatre by a theory of production and a type of play which are opposed to realism. They bring the theatre and the actor back to older ideas. They tear away the realistic stage where life is represented as actually taking place before our eyes. They enable the actor to present himself frankly as an artist arousing our emotions by his fresh virtuosity. They bring us to the "theatre theatrical" of Meyerhold.

Meyerhold began his work with the Moscow Art Theatre. He parted finally with Stanislavsky because

he came to believe in a different ideal of the theatre and a different technique of production. Alexander Bakshy has summed up the conflict excellently in his *Path of the Modern Russian Stage.* It was the conflict between objectivity and subjectivity. "The Art Theatre placed the centre of gravity of the production on the stage, Meyerhold transferred it to the audience. It would have made scarcely an atom of difference to the adequacy and completeness of the Art Theatre's performance if the audience had been entirely removed." Meyerhold did not wish to show the audience a section of real life. He wanted to evoke a fuller vision of the world. He began by presenting the actors on a relief stage, such as Fuchs created in Munich, standing out against a flat background. Soon, however, he was striving for a more "statuesque" effect. He gave up the depth of an inner stage for the depth of a wide forestage. Ultimately he returned in a measure—as the Shakespeare stage had returned—to the forms and relationships of the older theatre. From Oliver M. Sayler's translation in his *Russian Theatre under the Revolution* I quote Meyerhold's own analysis of what the ancient theatre and his own theatre gained from its forestage:

"Similar to the arena of a circus, pressed on all sides by a ring of spectators, the forestage is brought near the public, so that not one gesture, not one movement, not one glimpse of the actor should be lost in the dust

of the back stage. And see how thoughtfully tactful are these gestures, movements, postures and grimaces of the actor on the forestage. Of course. Could an actor with an inflated affectation or with insufficiently flexible bodily movements be tolerated at the proximity to the public at which the forestages of the old English, French, Spanish and Japanese theatres placed their actors?"

In mounting *Don Juan* at the Alexandrinsky Theatre in Petrograd in 1910, Meyerhold did away with the curtain, plunged the audience immediately into the atmosphere of this particular theatrical performance, and, to lay the emphasis on the virtuoso make-believe of the whole thing, kept the lights up in the house throughout the evening. Whatever scenic changes his artist, Golovin, desired were arranged on a small inner stage while the actors disported themselves in front. And how extraordinarily they did disport themselves! In Meyerhold's own words:

"It is necessary to remind the spectator during the whole course of the play of all the thousands of looms of the Lyonnaise factories preparing the silks for the monstrously numerous courtiers of Louis XIV; of the Gobelin hotel; of the town of painters, sculptors, jewellers and turners; of the furniture manufactured under the guidance of prominent artists; of all those masters producing mirrors and laces according to the Venetian models, stockings according to the English

model, cloth according to the Dutch model, and tin and copper according to the German.

"Hundreds of wax candles in three chandeliers from above and in two candlesticks on the forestage; little negroes filling the stage with stupefying perfumes, dripping them from a cut-glass flask on heated platinum plates; little negroes flitting on the stage here to pick up a lace handkerchief from the hands of Don Juan or there to push the chairs before the tired actors; little negroes tying the ribbons on the shoes of Don Juan while he is having a discussion with Sganarelle; little negroes handing the actors lanterns when the stage is submerged in semi-darkness; little negroes clearing away from the stage the mantles and the sabers after the desperate fight between Don Juan and the brigands; little negroes crawling under the table when the statue of the Commander comes on the stage; little negroes calling the public together by ringing a little silver bell and in the absence of the curtain announcing the intermissions,—these are not tricks created for the diversion of the snobs; all this is in the name of the main object of the play; to show the gilded Versailles realm veiled with a perfumed smoke."

Obviously the actor who performs upon such a stage is not the actor of our peep-show realism. He is the actor of frank, dominating virtuosity. He presents himself to us as, for the moment, a man possessed, an artist through whom flows an irresistible flood of crea-

tive energy. When I think of such performers and try to find them among our own players, I think of Al Jolson, demoniac upon the runway of the Winter Garden; I think of Fannie Brice in *The Follies* winning us to a belief in "Second Hand Rose" without a single aid of background, atmosphere or drama. Miss Brice does not impersonate this pitifully comic East Side girl. She sings about her in the first person and imitates her appearance and emotions; but all the time there is the most curious and fascinating undercurrent of intimacy between the actress as actress and the audience as audience. We see both the player and the played. The player introduces her own work to us, she almost criticises it, she certainly criticises Rose. In the slang of Broadway she "wises up" her audience to this odd little Jewish girl. Chevalier, Guilbert and Lauder are more distinguished players who have used the same presentational method notably.

By contrast with such work the actors of our so-called legitimate stages seem to find so little sustenance in realism. Upon Continental stages, very rarely on ours, the performance wins to distinction by ensemble, by the abdication of the individual. The unfettered instinct of our actor is to avoid ensemble and to compromise with our stage by asserting himself and his art to the point of what we call "personality" and no farther. In the theatre of Meyerhold personality, in a sense, will frankly flourish, but it will be deliberate

and artificial personality—personality with a dozen faces, each for its own part. The problem of the actor will still be the problem of direction; but with a theatre that avoids the representative quality of our realism the opportunities of direction and therefore of the actor will be immensely broadened.

It is a singular fact, and to some a disquieting fact, how far in such an account as this of the development of the new art of the theatre the director and the actor must be overshadowed by the artist and the architect. This is partly because the movement is still new enough to have developed comparatively few directors; and partly because in the vigor and breadth and inclusiveness of their ideas the artists are themselves directors. With the exception of such men as Martersteig and Hagemann they cannot execute direction; their temperament is not the executive temperament. But they can and they do inspire direction, and finally they discover directors through whom their ideas are given complete theatrical form. In America the artists have worked almost without directors, and have contributed their designs and, through their designs, their directorial ideas, to the ordinary producers of the realistic theatre; and yet they have already impressed a style upon our stage and measurably made over our conceptions of directing. But as yet they have not succeeded in driving our players towards the direct, presentational type of acting which curiously links Meyerhold

with Fannie Brice. This they cannot do without the active intercession of a director to whom it is a major and dominating conviction.

Of America's two directors who fall definitely into the new movement, Maurice Browne is a man of indomitable energy and utter integrity whose absorptions have been the Greek chorus and the repertory theatre, and whose conceptions of direction have been soundly eclectic rather than original. The remaining director, Arthur Hopkins, has given allegiance to a curiously negative faith which has remade realistic production, but which cannot be pushed far in the theatre of tomorrow.

In his monograph, *How's Your Second Act?* Hopkins sets for the director the task of capturing the unconscious mind of the audience, the deep, subliminal self whose exploration by Freud and Jung has made over modern psychological science. Like the hypnotist, Hopkins would "still the conscious mind." This can be accomplished in the theatre through simplification of background and through confining the actor to the most unobtrusive and natural expression of his emotion, "by giving the audience no reason to think about it, by presenting every phrase so unobtrusively, so free from confusing gesture, movement and emphasis, that all passing action seems inevitable, so that we are never challenged or consciously asked why. This whole treatment begins first with the manuscript, con-

tinues through the designing of settings, and follows carefully every actor's movement and inflection. If, throughout, this attitude of easy flow can be maintained the complete illusionment of the audience is inevitable."

"Illusionment," you will note. Is Hopkins talking of and for the peep-show? Hardly, for the producer of *Macbeth* and the associate of Robert E. Jones has too rich a sense of the mystic realities of modern science, a sense which forces him away from the limits of passive hypnosis. Coöperating with Jones, he goes further than any Anglo-Saxon has gone towards making the stage a place of spiritual interpretation. Instead of "illusionment," he might speak of "conviction," "belief," if his method of approach were more vigorous, more assertive. He achieves his hypnosis through quietude, through lull. He might achieve it —or some domination corresponding to it—through the frank, compelling virtuosity of the actor presented to us as, for the moment, a man possessed.

It is my own belief that no director and no theorist of the theatre has done so much as Jacques Copeau to reanimate the actor and to open up the avenues of his art. He has done this not primarily through the new stage which he has provided for his players, remarkable as it is. That was the immediate consequence of his impulse to cleanse and revivify the Parisian theatre. He did not begin as a theorist, unless it is a theory to

hold that the Parisian theatre needed to be cleansed, renovated, revivified by integrity and devotion. He sought intelligent and sensitive personalities to make his acting company. He found an economical little hall, and then he tried to present those personalities in the clothing of the dramatists.The limitations of the hall, with its poverty-stricken little stage, and the inner necessities of the new theatrical art that was forcing itself out of realism, gradually dictated modifications of the proscenium, and the construction of a permanent, architectural setting—until Copeau found himself working in the first genuinely new theatre in Europe. How he came to his philosophy of production and how he actually worked may best be understood by those who did not see this Théâtre du Vieux Colombier during its brief sojourn in New York, through these extracts from Waldo Frank's analysis of the work of Copeau, *The Art of the Vieux Colombier.*

"With his simplicity of means, the actor becomes Copeau's amplest instrument. Copeau believes that in his possibilities of voice, language, gesture, personal and integrated movement, and decoration, the actor should come first, quite irrespective of the producer's material resources. In this fact, already, he parts with many of his confrères. The actors, then, in their individual movements, create linear designs. In the ensemble of these movements, the design becomes vol-

umnear, or three-dimensioned. In their gestures, the form has its shadings and its emphasis; in the reading of dialogue, it has at once its outline and its atmosphere. The chief function of the costumes rises from the necessity of an æsthetic marriage between the human and the non-human elements in the design. There must be a background: certain materials in the form of draperies, drops and properties are needed for the elucidation of the play. These also must be organically merged into the desired form.

"From this means of creating scenic volume comes a new freedom of choice. The producer is released from the narrow exigencies of paint and canvas; he takes possession of a field whose fertile limits Copeau has not begun to measure. And yet its mechanical advantage is but the secondary value of this method. Its first is its essential fidelity to the spirit of drama, itself. For drama is eternally concerned with the planes, colors, metabolic changes of human action. These qualities are plastic. Drama is a plastic art. Copeau obeyed an infallible instinct when he turned to the most plastic means at his disposal: the dimensions of human bodies, of human movement and of human utterance.

"Consider his production of *Twelfth Night.* This comedy of Shakespeare has little weight as a dramatic action. It has infinite vistas of poetic charm. Its chief virtues are its airiness, its free dimensions, its

swift succeeding silhouettes of character and colors of mood. It was precisely these qualities that came forth in Copeau's handling. The play moved from four levels: the balcony, the main stage, the proscenium doors on either wing, the dungeon underneath the apron where Malvolio was imprisoned. From these four planes, the characters wove a design of fantastic movement. It lifted and wafted in the foreground of the play. And in the background, from out the shadows under the balcony of the Countess, roared the laughter of the tippling clowns—Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Aguecheek and their fellows—whose antics are the true motivation of the piece. These traceries of human movement, fragilely freighted with the color of costumes and with the perfume of the Shakespearean speech, moved back and forth upon the scene like some magic fancy. They were a form indeed—diaphanous and forever running on—of the romantic action. The Shakespearean words were of course not there. But all of their magic, all of their virtue had somehow found a form in the unrolling movement.

"*Twelfth Night* is a nosegay fluttering loosely in an April wind. But such a work as *Les Fourberies de Scapin* is a solid and incisive mass. Observe how the methods of Copeau contrive to meet its problem. The play is a mass, but not without grace: it has the solidity of the mental acrobat measuring his prowess upon volatile trapezes and flimsy paper rings. The

design of the play is this: Scapin, an irrepressible unit—and two pairs of lovers and two fathers as the fragile and flighty accessories to prove him. Copeau does not temporize with his design. He sets a naked platform upon the centre of his stage. And at once in its bold, sharp prominence the part of Scapin has a marvelous symbol. This platform stands for Scapin quite as clearly as Scapin, in his pied garment, stands on it. About it move the victims: shifting, uncertain, forever in the shadows:—waves beating against a rock and thrown upon it merely to fall back diminished. Molière stands forth, created. His farce has never been seen in this form; and yet he has not been belied. He has been simply more faithfully, more completely brought upon the stage. In the bluff blocking of the scene, in the unceasing body movement of the actors, it is his words that live."

In the theatre of Jacques Copeau we have a projection of the impulses and the ideas that have grown up through the quarter of a century since Craig and Appia began to labor.

Part Two

THE NEW PLAYHOUSE

CHAPTER XI.

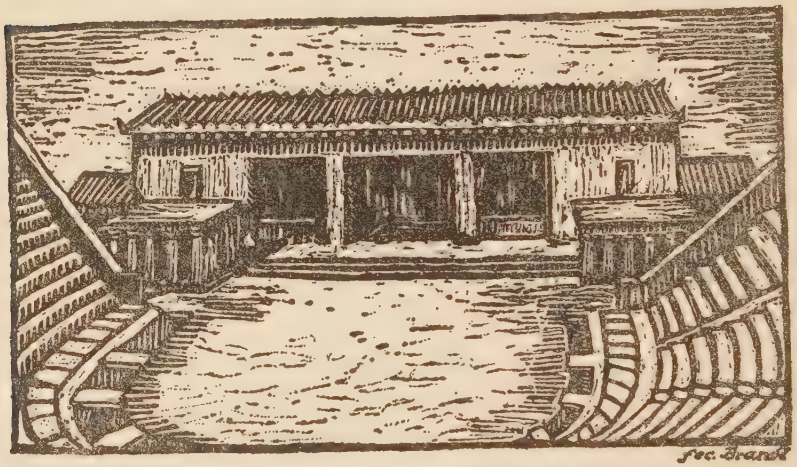
THE ETERNAL THEATRE.

CONCEIVED in godhead, born beside altars, slain in the brothel and born again in the soul of man—endlessly repeating in its own person the story of its immortal and rejuvenate god, Dionysus—the theatre has lived the whole history of Europe. No art has spanned such range of time and forms and morals. No art has so changed and so remained the same.

The history of the theatre begins for us beside Dionysiac altars more than twenty-five centuries ago. It begins there—as it began in India and China and Peru—a religious ritual. It sweeps on to our day, waxing and waning, dying out and being born again. In all these twenty-five centuries it passes through changes so complete and so extraordinary that but for one element—the spoken word—we could not recognize as the theatre the dozen strange congregations of audiences and actors, of wood and stone, which it has set up in these twenty-five centuries.

The first theatre . . . and the greatest . . . the circle about the altar table of Dionysus. Phallic proces-

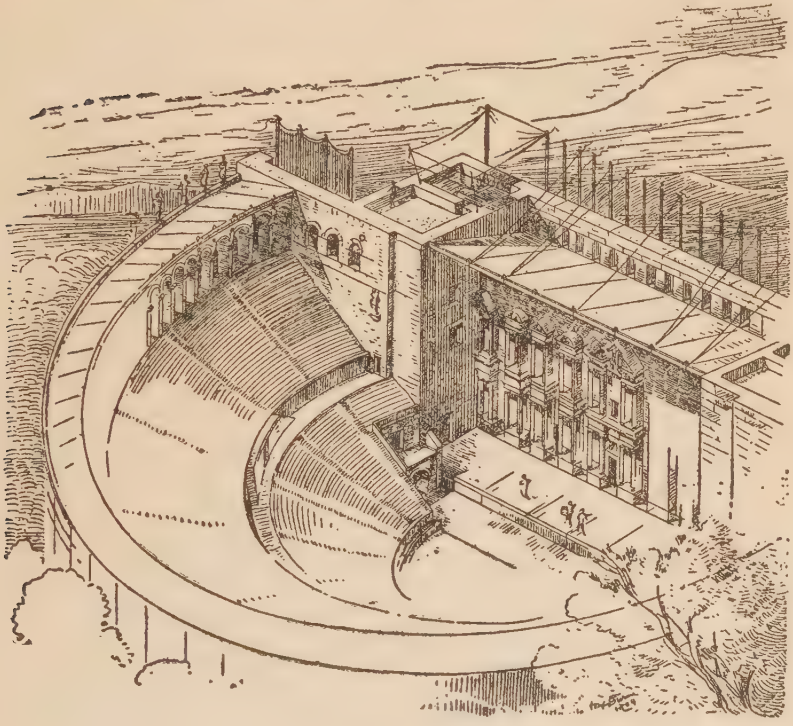
sions, dance that is song and prayer. Sun-glare and sun-shadows, the blue Attic sky, the open-air. In the beginning neither audience nor actors; only villagers united in a mystic and demoniac ceremony, praying with their bodies for the passing of winter and rebirth of life in the spring. Later, spectators and ministrants



A GREEK THEATRE

united by the actuality of this oldest religion. Finally, the heart of the religion of a great city; a bowl in the hillside of the Acropolis jammed with forty thousand citizens; a rude temple-front across one end; the altar and the dancing floor still in the centre of the people; a chanting, dancing chorus, link between the citizens and the three actors, who, set upon stilts and hidden behind masks, tell them over and over, play after play, year after year, the stories of their heroes and their

gods. Perhaps the three actors stand upon a high platform of the temple, which is also a dressing-room; perhaps they stand upon the dancing floor, the orchestra,



A ROMAN THEATRE

and only the gods ascend, by cumbrous machinery, to the roof of the temple. However that may be, in accents swept away ever and again by winds from the bay of Salamis, these maskers upon stilts present in formal narrative with interventions of chorus, messenger and

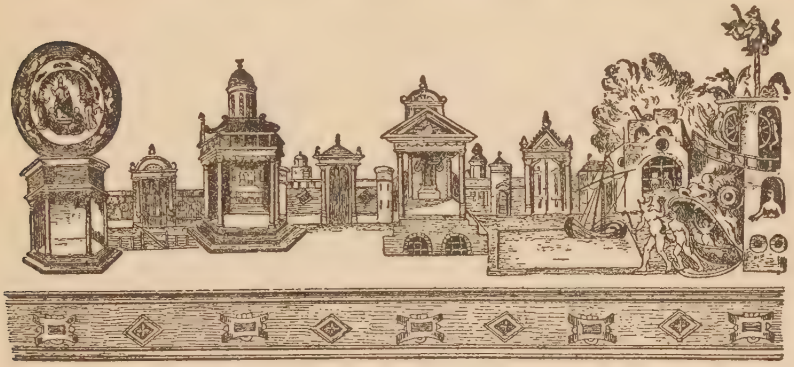
god, fabulous and familiar stories to a multitude that swelters under the Mediterranean sun. . . .

Rome has its theatre as well as its Coliseum, and sometimes it finds it hard to distinguish between the two. The shape of the theatre is the Greek, debased. There is still the semi-circle of stone benches holding thousands upon thousands. But the orchestra at its foot has shrunken to a crescent for the senators to sit in; the altar is gone; the scena, the temple-dressing room, is a towering wall, high as the bank of seats; at its base the problematic stage where the Greek actor may have trod has been broadened out and lowered, and there alone the action of the play takes place, a remnant of the Greek chorus mingling with the actors. A curtain that drops into a slot in front of the stage; colored wigs instead of masks, unless the producer is a Greek dilettante; mules, six hundred of them,—and spectacle. Religion has fled with the altar. Even the sun is gone, for elaborate awnings may be drawn to protect the pleasure-seeking spectators. Rome dies and the theatre with her. . . .

Five hundred years later, rebirth, in the nave of the cathedral. Religion calls forth the drama once more. Before the high altar and in stations reproducing biblical scenes the choristers act out liturgical dramas of the life of Christ, and the stories of the testaments. Candles, incense, and sunlight stained by the glass of high windows; Latin phrases knocking about among the far arches, only half heard, while the eyes of a

thousand lusty believers delight in the pageant of their faith. . . .

Soon the miracle plays are altogether too popular. They must be taken out of the church and set up on the common, where there is room for all to see. In France the guilds of carpenters build a dozen fantastic houses



THE MEDIÆVAL PLATFORM STAGE

The long stage with several scenes shown at the same time, used in mystery plays at Valenciennes in 1547. At the left is Heaven; then follow various "mansions", the inn, the house of the high priest, etc., until we reach Hellmouth at the right.

along the back of a platform more than a hundred feet long, and, from Heaven at one end to Hell's Mouth at the other, past the inn, the temple, the house of the high priest, the action of these miracles, these mysteries of the saints, pass on to rude comedy as the gusty devils receive the damned into the yawning flames of their "mansion." The tongue is the popular tongue. Soon the guilds are furnishing funds, work, and actors, and are animating the whole with the marvelous creative

spirit of craftsmanship that swept Europe out of the dark ages ready for the Renaissance. The theatre is back in the open air again, religious, ritualistic. It is a thing of festival once more. . . .

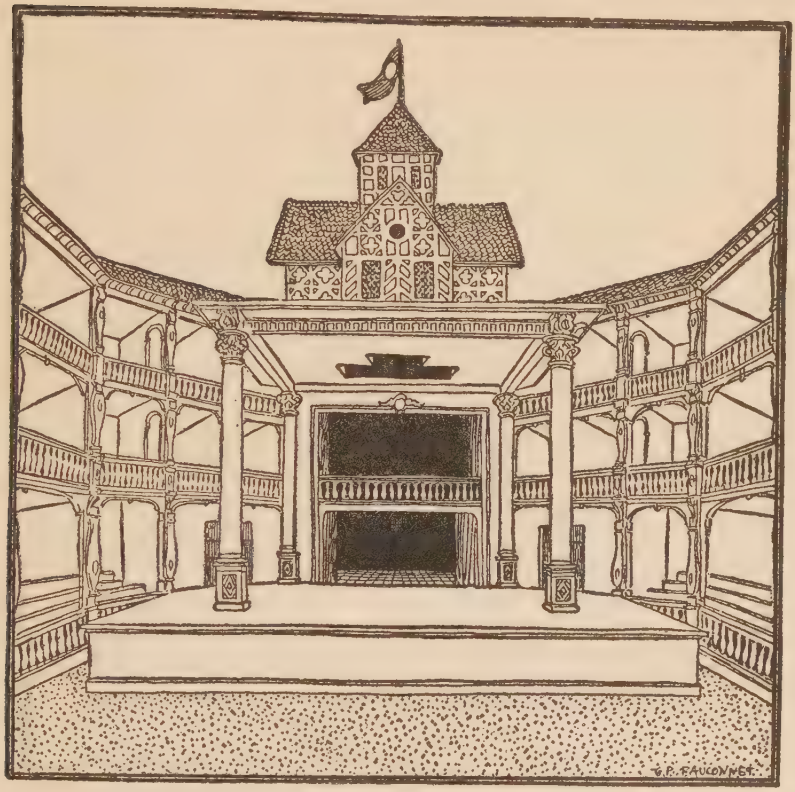
In England the guilds bring drama from the theatre of the church to the theatre of the booth. The bib-

THE BOOTH STAGE OF THE GUILDS

The mediæval stage used in England and Germany for the presentation of mystery plays after the guilds had taken them over from the church. In England such stages, with two or three scenes one above another, were placed on wagons and hauled from one part of town to another.

lical stories and the lives of the saints are acted out upon dozens of small wheeled platforms that are hauled from place to place about the city. Sometimes the players descend to the street to act; sometimes from their dressing-rooms close to the ground they mount to a platform above, and sometimes to a level still higher. These strange restricted little stages follow each other in procession the whole day through, acting over and over their rude plays as one succeeds another

before the expectant townsfolk on Corpus Christi. . . .
It is still the theatre when there are neither Greek



AN ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

Shakespeare's Globe as reconstructed by G. P. Fauconnet in *Album du Vieux Colombier.*

bowls, Gothic naves, French platforms nor the wagons of the guilds, when strollers invade the inn yard, set up a scaffold and play moralities and chronicles to the

stable boys, apprentices, guildsmen and thieves who crowd the inn yard and to the travellers who step out from their rooms to watch from the balconies that circle above.

And so—as Pepys said a century later,—"to the playhouse,"—the first in Europe. Not altogether a house this theatre built in 1576 by Burbage in Bankside, opposite London. The shell of an inn, the heart of a bear-pit, a tall doughnut of a building with galleries like the inn galleries all round its inner wall, these for the gentry. Out from the farthest side of the hexagon juts a platform some forty feet across. On this the play is acted, later with a "heavens" or wooden canopy overhead to protect the actor a little from sun or English rain. Where the stage joins the back wall there are doors right and left, a central nook or "study," in which properties and indications of scenery may be placed, and above, a balcony for Juliet. This, with the yard about the stage filled by a noisy mob of groundlings, is the theatre Shakespeare wrote for. No ritual, but no curtain and no roof. Plenty of God's elements fighting with the court against the Puritans. Cromwell's parliament bans the theatre. There is some trouble about the sun; it never really gets into drama again. . . .

Meantime in Italy two theatres, one popular, one aristocratic. The *commedia dell' arte,* first of all a street entertainment, later going indoors as the "comedy

of masks" and carrying the scenery of the street with it. A theatre of virtuosity, in which the players improvise their lines upon scenarios of buffoonery and intrigue. A theatre of stock characters, stock costumes and stock

THE COMMEDIA DELL' ARTE

Between the two portraits by Callot, of typical Italian stage characters of the 16th century, appears one of the stages erected in the streets by the roaming players prior to 1600.

masks, with the famous figures Pantaloon, the Venetian merchant, Dottore, the doctor from Bologna, Spavienta, the Neapolitan braggadocio, Pullicinella, a wag from Apulia, Arlecchino (Harlequin) and Columbina and other unmasked waiting maids. A theatre in

which intimacy counts even more than in the Elizabethan; which is at its best out in the streets and which suffers from the curtain and the proscenium and the artificial light so dear to the other Italian theatre. . . .

This theatre, the theatre of Lorenzan magnificence, of masque and pageantry, is the prototype of the opera house and, to a lesser extent, the playhouse of today. Inigo Jones, the great designer of Tudor and Stuart

ITALIAN COMEDY SETTING

The Commedia dell' arte, when it came indoors in the 17th century, utilized a street scene of this sort upon its stage. The many houses had practicable doors and windows. Molière sometimes used a similar setting.

masques, went to Italy to observe it, and, bringing back its proscenium and curtain and lights and scenery, laid the model for the English theatre when the Restoration removed the ban of the Puritans. This Italian theatre began perhaps in an imitation of the Roman, like so much in the Renaissance. The Teatro Olympico in

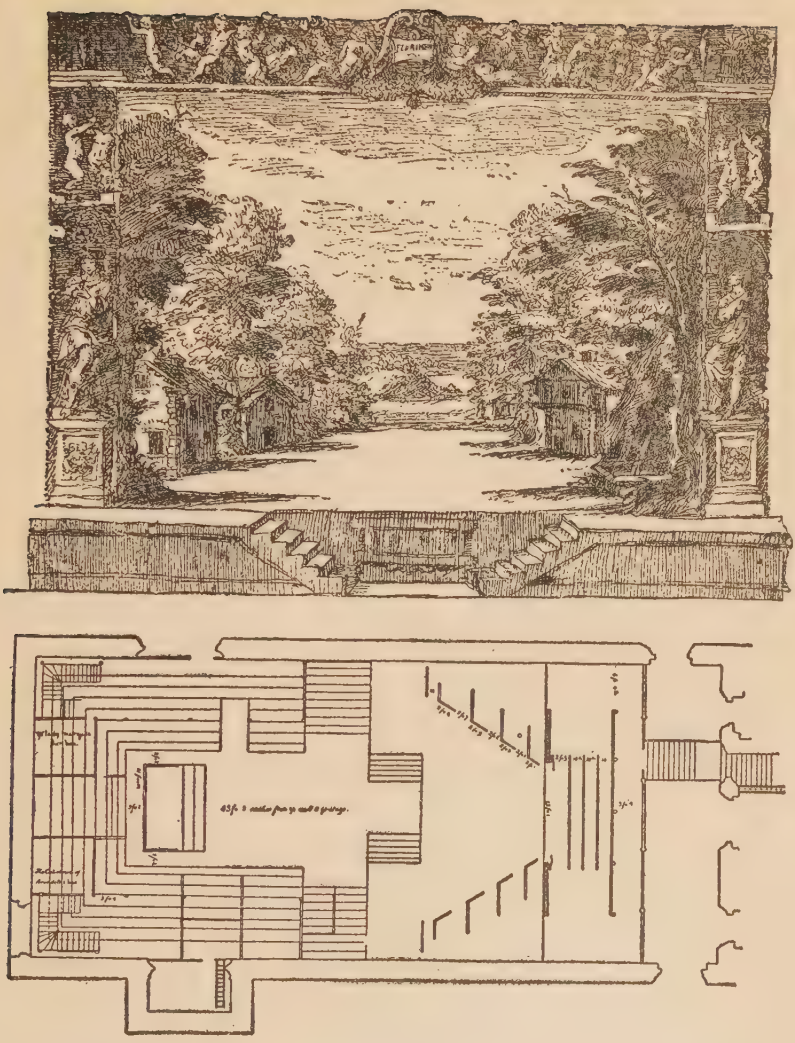
AN ITALIAN COURT MASQUE

Callot's etching of one of the great spectacles presented in 16th century palaces from which our own form of opera house and theatre is derived. Here the proscenium appeared definitely for the first time. Note the use of runways from the stage to the main floor, and the presence of actors upon this floor as in Reinhardt's Grosses Schauspielhaus.

Vicenza, built four years after Burbage's Theatre, has a Roman auditorium and a Roman stage with its three doors, but behind these arched doorways five elaborate streets run off in violent perspective. Perhaps someone thought of widening the middle door to get at the scenery; at any rate, the next theatres present a proscenium filling the whole stage and showing elaborate scenery behind its curtain. Somewhat in the Greek tradition, the action cannot be confined to the stage. The stage is merely a colorful, changing background for the evolutions of the actors and supernumeraries that fill the floor of the great halls in which these prosceniums are set up. By a process of slow but natural evolution, the balconies assume the horseshoe shape of the opera house, and seats are placed on the floor, until the action is confined once more to the stage, as in Rome.

France—first with the miracle plays—comes to the theatre of literature and of contemporary life later than England. By the time Racine and Corneille are ready, the court is imitating the Italian opera houses. Molière's strollers come into the covered tennis courts of Paris instead of the inns that housed Burbage, and set up there a miniature version of the raised stage, curtain, scenery, and steps down to the forestage, which they are soon to enjoy in the Petit-Bourbon Palace.

The Italian playhouse, transferred to England, after the Restoration, reaches by the middle of the eighteenth century a form which is recognizable as late as the



AN INIGO JONES MASQUE

The design for Jones' court masque, *Florimène,* produced in 1635, and the plan of the hall in which it was given. The actors passed down onto the floor below the stage.

nineteenth in the Drury Lane of Sheridan. The orchestra, reserved for the spectators, and rows of shallow balconies curving close to the walls above, might belong to our own Metropolitan Opera House. But the proscenium opening reaches the extraordinary width of seventy feet, while before it lies an apron eighteen feet deep, with boxes on either side and permanent entrances in the proscenium itself. Performances are given at night; candle light gives way to oil and then gas, and finally footlights appear. . . .

From such a playhouse to the theatre that houses Ibsen is a matter of refinement and paring away. The towering galleries give way at the sides, and one or at most two balconies jut far out from the back towards the stage. The apron disappears, and, as electric light develops, the scenery recedes into a box. Realism, an exact representation of life, takes the place of the theatrical conventions that have flourished for twenty-four centuries. The director lets down, firmly but unobtrusively, the famous fourth wall. . . .

This is The Theatre, this strange agglomeration of amphitheatres, chancels, platforms, wagons, inn yards, bear-pits, tennis courts, royal ballrooms, picture frames. It has flourished by sunlight and candlelight. It has danced and strutted and sat still. It has worshiped the gods, railed at convention, and fouled its mouth with indecencies. This Dionysus has died a dozen deaths and won a dozen rebirths. If some Martian were to

see a performance in Athens or in Bankside placed beside a performance in the Belasco Theatre, would he guess for a moment that he had looked upon the same institution, the same instinctive expression of godhead?

Should we then have imagined that because we had pulled down the fourth wall and called it a curtain this theatre of ours was set forever?

CHAPTER XII.

THE MOVIES—THE CURTAIN BECOMES THE STAGE

THE history of the physical theatre from the Greek amphitheatre to the peep-show of Ibsen is a history of change, the story of a dozen theatres in one. It forbids us to believe that our playhouse is the last. It forbids us to believe that, whether good or bad, this perfecting of realism will continue for many years in the shape it has taken.

What, then, is to be the next theatre? What will be the relation of its auditorium to its stage, of its audience to its actors, of its drama to godhead? How will it develop from the theatre that we have? Can we note signs of such a new theatre already in the alterations in settings, prosceniums and forestage that have taken place here and abroad under the promptings of the new stagecraft?

Or—and this is something not to be dismissed too lightly—is the new theatre already regnant among us, already a thing of fixed and appropriate structure, as different from our theatre in its physical and spiritual qualities as our theatre is different from the Greek? Is the motion picture, with its silent actors, its silver

screen and its darkened auditorium, the next theatre?

We have made the curtain the fourth wall of realism. Are we now to see upon it more of reality than ever the stage could give? Or is it to be the theatre of imagination, of vigorous beauty, which has battled with realism for twenty years? Or something so different from what we have known in the theatre of the past, from what we may know in the future, that it will be the eighth art?

Whatever the ultimate place of the motion picture, its relation to the quarrel of the realist and the artist of imagination is full of curious significance. The screen, no less than the stage, has shown both tendencies. It began with romantic melodramas of today. It veered off into spectacular costume productions. In the work of the late George Loane Tucker, a director of very great promise, it developed an aptitude for expressing spiritual ideas, as well as character, in terms of our own life. Lately the contributions of German directors who got their training in drama on Reinhardt's stage, have leavened our general run of humdrum, drearily sentimental realism with sharp and colorful attempts at expressionism such as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *The Golem* and with colorful historical films such as *Passion* (*Du Barry*), and *Deception,* (*Anne Boleyn*).

Five years ago, when the way of the imaginative artist was thorny and barren everywhere but in Germany and Russia, I felt that the future of his work lay on the

screen. This was, I suspect, an attempt to find some opening for him, however restricted, in the blank walls of managerial ignorance and indifference. The reasons I advanced were so cogent that I am rather inclined to think that though it might be a better solution of the old quarrel to leave the screen to realism, and the stage to the newer art, the two will probably reflect both tendencies in the future as they have in the past.

Any one who has observed modern "art photography" (how disquieting it is to read of "art photography" and "art theatres" but never of "art opera" or "art painting") or seen some of the better film work of D. W. Griffith's photographers, Bitzer and Sartov, knows the photographic beauty that can be added to the ancient charms of line, mass and contrast. If he knows the screen, he knows how dramatically—if seldom, and apparently by accident—the interpretative power of design, which the artist of the new stagecraft preaches, has been made to serve random scenes. He knows, too, the almost unlimited powers of trick photography in achieving miraculous and superhuman effects.

One of the most interesting and significant developments of Joseph Urban's expedition into film work has been his achievement of remarkably illusive exteriors from settings built either full size or as models, or even painted in two-dimensions and photographed in the studio. To the beauties of nature and of architecture,

in which the screen can so obviously outdistance the stage, must be added an exact reproduction of an artist's sketched conception, correct in design and perspective for every patron in the picture theatre. Even though the stage artist gives up two-dimensional painting and falls back on solid plastic reality, the ideal composition that he sees in his mind's eye and sketches upon paper can only be true for a very few spectators seated, as it were at the focal point of his vision. The motion picture camera can be placed at that point, the scene fixed photographically in exactly the composition desired, and this picture reproduced endlessly and at will in any theatre where films are projected.

Two other technical considerations are worth attention. For one thing, it is obvious that if the simplification of the new stagecraft is desirable in the theatre, it is immensely more desirable on the screen, where the only means of holding the attention is visual and any cluttering up of the scene with detail distracts the eye from the actor. In another regard, the facilities of the screen will aid the artist, instead of the artist aiding the screen. The artist of the photoplay has thirty, fifty, eighty scenes of different compositions to create, compared to the three or four of a play. This is important because the purpose of the artist is to suit the atmosphere of a scene to the emotion of its action, and almost no scene of any great length can maintain the same emotion. The imaginative play

tends to break up into shorter scenes than the realistic, because through this it is enabled to maintain a more perfect mood. The photoplay breaks up because of its very nature. The imaginative drama tends naturally towards action as well as toward beauty. Though poetry of words must always remain the province of the stage, until a super-phonograph of far greater naturalness than ours makes synchronization of speech and film not only possible but bearable, the poetry of action goes over easily and directly and far more powerfully into the swift-running film.

Looking at the nature of the theatre, it seemed to me once—and the thesis might still be maintained—that the drama is naturally and ideally a parochial art, and that a parochial art must be a realistic art. Made especially for a single community, it must specialize in the things closest to that community. Superficially, these seem to be the realistic details of life. It has only occurred to us during the past year or two that our life of today may be seen through other glasses than the realistic.

As to realism and its natural accompaniments, interpretation, morals, and thesis, the motion picture is international, and morals are notoriously a matter of geography. Considering the breadth and range of the film audience, one must admit that the level of its art, morally speaking, must be the dead level of platitude. The movies, as Shaw said, will tend to express "what

an agricultural laborer thinks right, and what an old-fashioned governess thinks properly sentimental."

If I feel now that this analysis was hardly complete, it is because recent events on screen and stage have demonstrated that realism and the thesis have unusual possibilities in the films, and that theatrical history has moved very swiftly in favor of even more radical new methods of production than the first practitioners of the new stagecraft imagined.

The power of the screen to be literally exact, both pictorially and humanly, to give us the absolute and intimate actuality of our life, is more than evident. When we watch the work of a director such as Griffith, we do not see life with the fourth wall removed; we see life, fourth wall and all. We are actually in the midst of life. It follows, therefore, that it is within the power of the director to preach—whether or not it is within the disposition of his international audience to accept. He can draw his deductions from actuality and reinforce them by the lettered dialogue of the screen; in fact he can go beyond dialogue, and inject his own reflections independent of his characters.

What the screen cannot do that the stage can do, is to follow the newest and the freshest trend of the artist in the theatre. It cannot escape from representation; it cannot present actor, costumes, properties, draperies and architectural settings frankly for what they are—things that speak out of their substance and material,

and not through something that they try to imitate or suggest. It cannot recover the spirit that animated all theatrical production, Greek or mediæval, Shakespearean or Georgian, before realism introduced photographic representation of life. The screen is inherently representative . . . second-hand. It must photograph something and create the illusion of it in two-dimensions on the screen. Even if it photographs the new type of production—the "presentational," to borrow Bakshy's word from his *Path of the Modern Russian Stage* —what we have is a representation of the actual actor and the surrounding materials. They do not speak to us directly.

Linked with this consideration is the fact that while the camera can give us every sense of looking through the proscenium frame at a slice of life it cannot give us the stimulant of a presentational theatre of new levels and relations, forestages, portals, actors appearing from among the audience, the immense variety of visual and oral forms which the new theatre is opening up for the playwright of the future. The screen can do everything that the realistic theatre can do; it cannot compass all the possibilities of the imaginative theatre, though it may go beyond them in certain directions.

From which I am drawn to conclude that, though realism may depend more and more upon the films, the screen and the stage will share to a great extent in the exploitation of the two types of drama. The screen and

the stage draw slightly different audiences, and it may be that the more experimental, the more advanced and the more responsive audiences will be found in the theatre; but, however that may be, it seems reasonably likely that the more representational aspects of the new stagecraft and the types of plays it stands for will develop on the screen at the same time that they develop on the stage. "Movements," if they amount to anything, have their roots in the audience as much as in the artists and producers. They are general and extend from one art to another, even when these arts are further separated than the stage and the screen. Had the photoplay existed in 1830 it would have felt the impact of the romantic movement quite as much as did the stage.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NEXT THEATRE.

FOR fifty years our theatre has been steadily and slowly working over from the bizarre operatic structure set upon the drama of Europe by the bursting luxuriance of the seventeenth century Italian courts towards a reticent auditorium which should display, upon an illusively lighted stage within a frame, a realistic representation of life. At last in the work of American architects like Ingalls and Blackall and Germans like Oskar Kaufmann, in such theatres as Henry Miller's and Maxine Elliott's in New York, and the Hebbel Theater and the Volksbühne in Berlin, we have reached a form appropriate to the purposes of the nineteenth century drama instead of to the masques, pageants, ballets and operas which absorbed the energies of the Italian courts two centuries before, and which shaped that ornate gilt and plaster shell into which the drama that followed Shakespeare and Molière was thoughtless enough to slip.

For a hundred years scattered artists, architects and directors have been fighting both the court opera house and the modern peep-show theatre in an endeavor to

create still another form of playhouse—a structure neither as absurd as the opera house nor as limiting as the picture frame stage; that is, a playhouse not narrowly archæologic, yet instinct with the live and healthy theatricalism of the Elizabethan stage, the dignity and grandeur of the Greek; a theatre fitted to every exigency of theatrical presentation; a theatre for the future as well as the past; a theatre for the drama that grows tired of the limitations of realism.

All this effort towards a new playhouse to succeed the present theatre as the present theatre succeeded the theatre of Garrick, of Shakespeare, of the mystery plays, and of Greek tragedy, has evolved no more than three definitely and completely functioning houses; but it has left a great mass of most interesting and fecund and significant experiment and suggestion. Up to the past ten years most of it was German; and most of it was busy with discreet modifications of the existing features of theatrical architecture.

The first indication of a change in the conception of the relations of auditorium and stage reaches back to that great practical force in the theatre, Goethe. At the beginning of the past century he associated himself with a remarkable and innovating architect, Carl Friedrich Schinkel in theories and projects which ultimately resulted in the plans for the theatre in Weimar with which Goethe's name is still associated. The object of Goethe, imbued with sudden enthusiasm over the

discovery that Shakespeare did not write for a stage of definite scenes, was to bring back the apron and renew the intercourse of spectator and actor. Schinkel's plans for recreating the forestage had perhaps little effect upon the Italianate playhouses of his day; but in the light of twentieth century effort they are most suggestive. They proved the forerunner of much experiment in Germany before Max Littmann, Georg Fuchs and others definitely established the forestage and its portals as essential to imaginative drama.

As Schinkel worked with Goethe, so Gottfried Semper, the other outstanding theatre architect of nineteenth century Germany, found association with a great creative dramatist and director, Wagner. With him Semper labored upon the problem of the proscenium, evolving the "mystic abyss" or neutral and empty frame between auditorium and stage, which Wagner desired as a means of heightening the illusion of another world. Since that attempt to remove the actor from the reality of contact with his audience amounts in one way to the perfecting of the picture-frame idea, it seems to me that Semper's greatest contribution lay rather in his work upon the auditorium itself. There he developed Schinkel's idea of seating the audience in a single, steeply rising bank, somewhat after the manner of the Greeks, and thus bringing the spectators into closer spiritual relation with one another as well as with the stage.

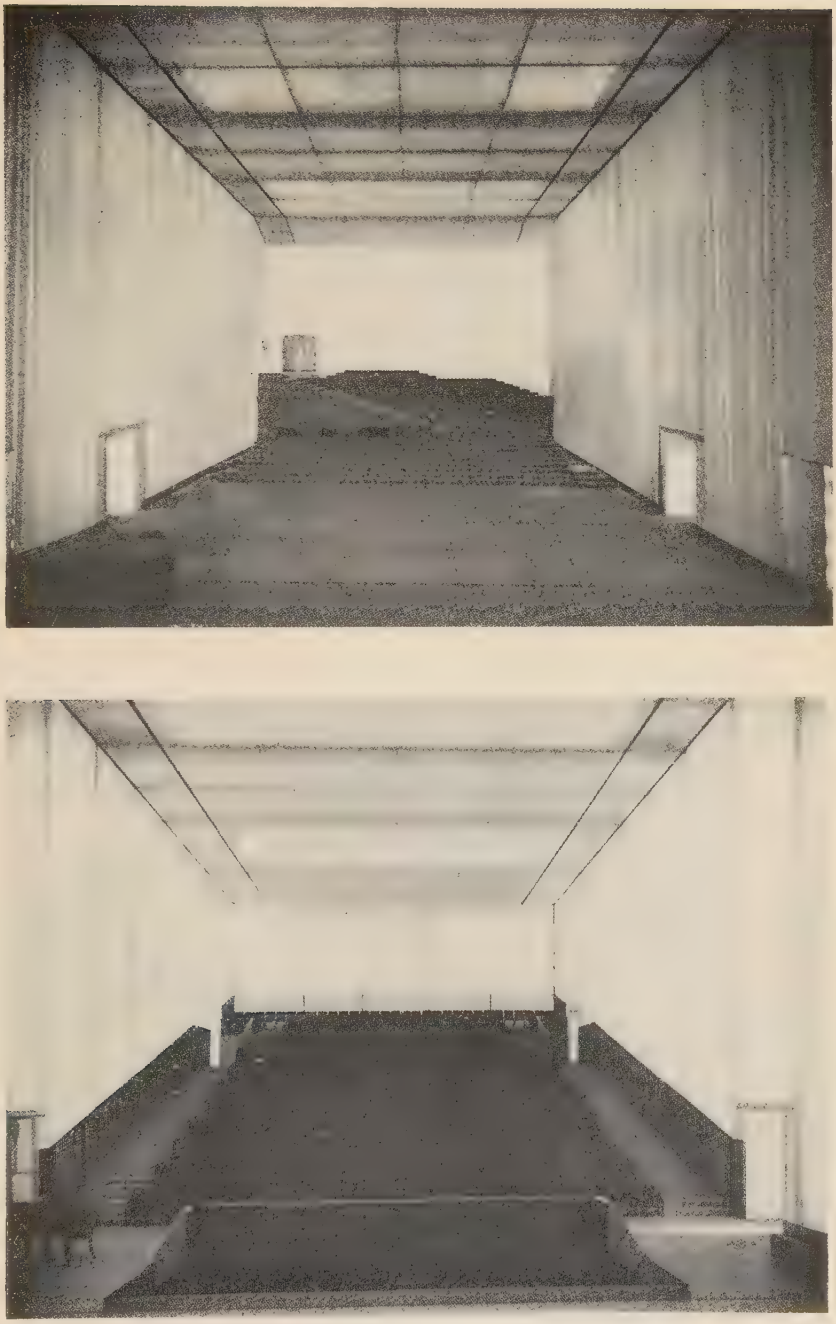
In Max Littmann, the greatest theorist and builder of the modern German theatre, the "Rang versus Ring" idea of substituting a single, unified and well-graded bank of seats for the aristocratic, anti-social and visually bad arrangement of superimposed galleries, finds its warmest and strongest support. But Littmann's efforts have gone into more extensive and original reform in his "adaptable proscenium," which combines the ordinary realistic picture frame and the Wagner "mystic abyss" with a forestage and entrances in the proscenium frame. More than a dozen theatres in Germany now testify to Littmann's fruitful experiments with stage, proscenium and auditorium, notably the Schiller Theater in Charlottenburg, the twin theatres of Stuttgart and the Munich Künstler Theater. His reforms have remade both auditorium and stage, combining them in a perfected structure that goes as far towards the new playhouse as you can go without casting aside all resemblance to our familiar theatre.

When the catastrophe of the Great War fell upon the theatres of Europe, Germany was manifestly ready for experiments along far more radical lines. The various schemes for Shakespearean stages, forestages, portals, permanent settings and inner prosceniums, which I have described in Chapter IX, all tended towards the development of both spectators and directors who were eager for experiment on lines leading away from the realistic theatre and towards a new form

of playhouse. At least two significant German experiments preceded the war.

One was in a place and an institution quite apart from the commercial theatre—the great hall of the Jaques-Dalcroze School of Eurythmics in Hellerau near Dresden. There in the great hall of the group of handsome buildings where Dalcroze taught his new system of musical and bodily education through movement, curious and revolutionary experiments took place. Dalcroze brought to his assistance two remarkable men: one was A. von Salzmann, reputed the greatest authority on lighting in the European theatre, whom Maurice Browne calls "the master of us all"; the other, that pioneering giant, Adolphe Appia, who here had his first opportunity to work unhampered on the practical details of production. Rejected in his home, Russia, Salzmann found success in Germany.

The hall, which was designed by Heinrich Tessenow, combined both stage and auditorium in a single oblong room. Whatever served as stage and setting was placed at one end. The other end of the room was occupied by the banked seats of the audience. Except for an open space of shining floor, there was no division between the spectators and the stage, not even the division of lighting. Both the audience and the setting were illumined by the same lambent and mysterious glow proceeding from the translucent walls around, behind, and above them. These walls were of something re-



THE DALCROZE PLAYHOUSE

The remarkable hall in the Eurhythmic School at Hellerau, near Dresden, where Adolphe Appia produced Claudel's *L'Annonce faite à Marie* in association with Jaques-Dalcroze and Alexander von Salzmann, the lighting expert. In the upper picture is the stage-scene built into one end of the room; in the lower, the seats of the spectators at the other end. Through translucent walls of silk, the light of 10,000 electric bulbs plays upon stage and audience alike.

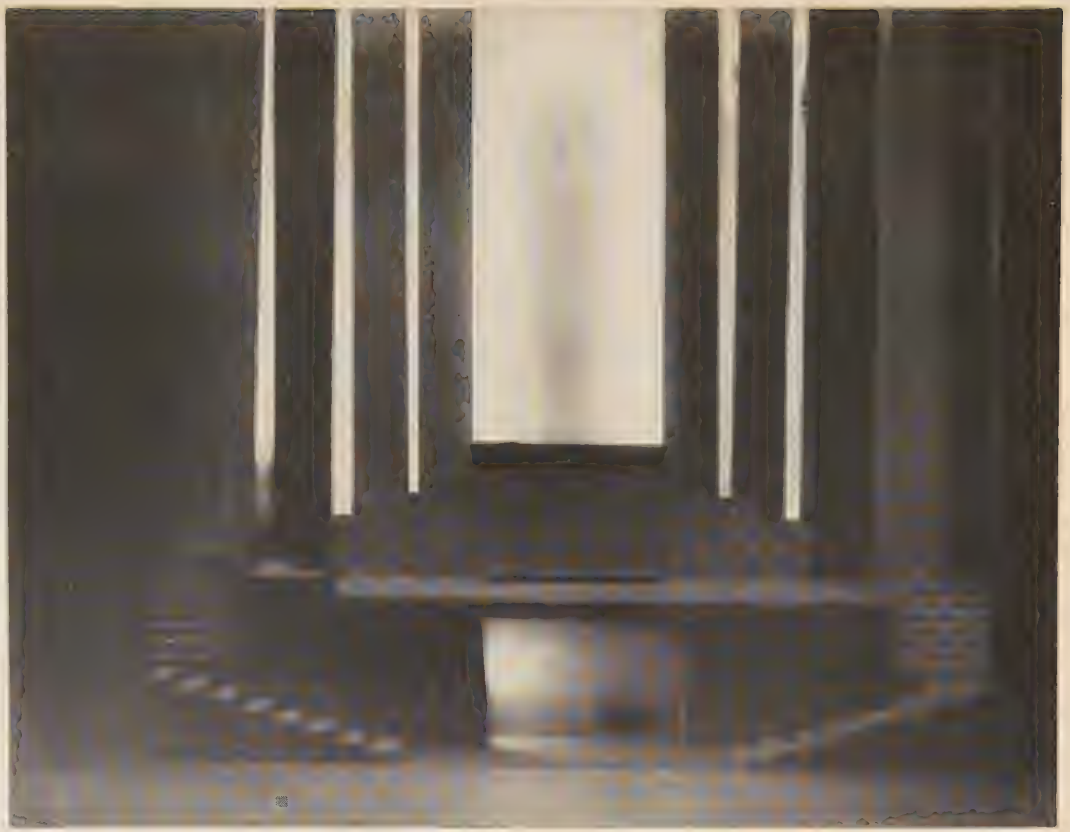
sembling balloon silk, covered with cedar oil; behind this surface were batteries of some 10,000 bulbs so arranged and circuited as to permit all manner of shades and gradations of light. Frank E. Washburn Freund in the English *Stage Yearbook* for 1914 graphically describes this illumination as "a diffused light resembling daylight without visible sun." The stage and the scene were identical and consisted merely of a complex of movable platforms and steps, supplemented by simple flats and hangings. These could be rearranged almost endlessly. With these materials Appia, Dalcroze and Salzmann created the setting for Paul Claudel's *L'Annonce faite à Marie* illustrated on another page.

The other radical experiment towards a new playhouse was made by Max Reinhardt in his productions of *Œdipus Rex* by Sophocles, *Orestes, The Miracle,* Hauptmann's *Festspiel,* and *Everyman* in circuses, and led finally to his remodeling of one of these circus buildings into the Grosses Schauspielhaus in Berlin. The circus in Europe is not the tented carnival we know in America. It is a mixture of variety and athletic show housed in a permanent building rather like Madison Square Garden. It frequently utilizes gauze scenery around its inner ring, which, when lighted from within, becomes transparent on the side of the ring nearest the spectator and shows opaque on the other side of the house as background or scenery for the performance. Reinhardt discarded the transparent scenery,

and blotted out his audience in darkness, lighting only the centre of the circus, in which his actors appeared, and one end of the building, where they made their exits and their entrances. The success of these presentations, particularly of *Œdipus,* was tremendous; for Reinhardt drew from the proximity of his audience to the immense crowd of actors in its midst a new and extraordinary intimacy combined with grandeur and power. *Œdipus* was first mounted in 1910 and was shown to 317,000 people in 93 performances in 26 cities; at least 50,000 spectators gained admittance at less than a quarter a head.

Here, as elsewhere, it can hardly be denied that Reinhardt drew inspiration from Craig, who dreamed thus of what the German producer created in his Theatre of the Five Thousand: "I see a great building to seat many thousands of people. At one end rises a platform of heroic size on which figures of a heroic mould shall move. The scene shall be such as the world shows us, not as our own particular little street shows us. The movements of these scenes shall be noble and great: all shall be illuminated by a light such as the spheres give us, not such as the footlights give us, but such as we dream of."

The philosophy back of the Theatre of the Five Thousand is described by Reinhardt's literary director, Arthur Kahane, in the following passage translated by



A HELLERAU PRODUCTION BY APPIA

Claudel's *L'Annonce faite à Marie* as staged by Adolphe Appia in the Dalcroze Theatre at Hellerau. The scene in the woods, with the cave below and a gothic arch of light in the background. The materials used upon the stage are more or less permanent and adaptable to different arrangements of setting.

Huntley Carter from *Die Blätter des Deutschen Theaters* and printed in his *Theatre of Max Reinhardt:*

"The first law of the new theatre is utmost simplicity. Apart from the consideration that there is no time for complicated changes, the vast space demands the simplest of forms and strong, big, severe lines. All accessories are superfluous; they cannot possibly be noticed, or, if they are, they are a source of distraction. At the most scenic decoration can only be frame, not function. The elaboration of details, the emphasising of nuances disappear; the actor and the actor's voice are truly essential, while lighting becomes the real source of decoration, its single aim being to bring the important into the light, and to leave the unimportant in the shadow.

"Thus the effects are simplified and heightened according to the need of monumentality. Under the influence of these mighty spaces, these big, severe lines, all that is small and petty disappears, and it becomes a matter of course to appeal to the hearts of great audiences with the strongest and deepest elements. The petty and unimportant—elements that are not eternal in us—cease to have effect. This theatre can only express the great eternal elemental passions and the problems of humanity. In it, spectators cease to be mere spectators; they become the people; their emotions are simple and primitive, but great and powerful, as becomes the eternal human race.

"Many things that appear to most people to be inseparable from the theatre are being discarded. No curtain separates stage and auditorium. On entering the theatre the spectator feels and is impressed by the possibilities of space, and the essential mood is created in him to be preserved after the piece has begun. No small, strongly circumscribed, impassable frame separates the action of the play from the outer world, and the action flows freely through the whole of the theatre. The peep-show character of the 'scene,' which was known neither to the stage of the ancients, to the Shakespearean stage, nor to the Molièrean stage, and which to people of a conservative frame of mind is still the highest point of theatrical art, simply because they are not aware that they merely worship a fossilised fragment of Italian opera and ballet tradition, has vanished. The chorus arises and moves in the midst of the audience; the characters meet each other amid the spectators; from all sides the hearer is being impressed, so that gradually he becomes part of the whole, and is rapidly absorbed in the action, a member of the chorus, so to speak. The close contact (intimacy) is the chief feature of the new form of the stage. It makes the spectator a part of the action, secures his entire interest, and intensifies the effect upon him.

"Big spaces compel the unfolding of personality. It is in these that men develop their best and final power. Though separated by great distances, men still face

A REINHARDT CIRCUS PRODUCTION

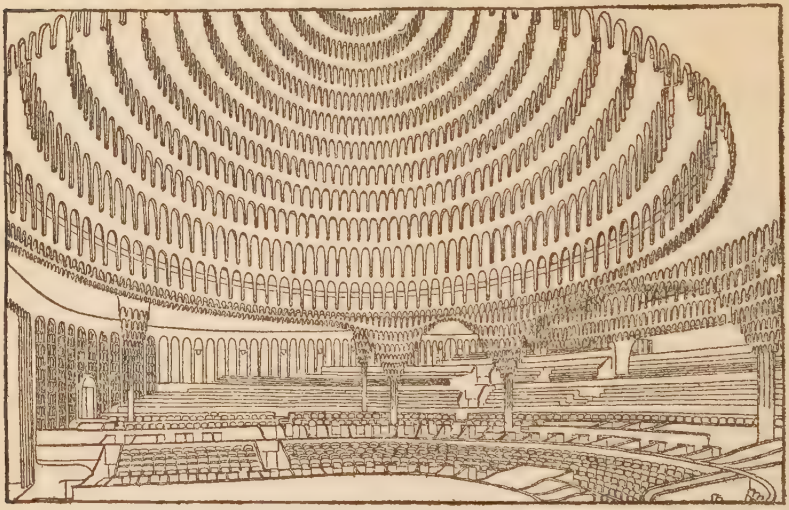
Setting and action from Hauptmann's commemorative *Festspiel* (1912), as staged by Reinhardt in a great exhibition hall without proscenium or footlights.

each other, and inevitably the conflicting feeling arises as to who is the stronger personality. Here strength and passion become the predominating qualities, the quintessence of tragedy, the conflict of personalities, the two dramatic elements contained in and transmitted by space. It is thus possible to rediscover a feeling which has been lost to us, but without losing that process of greater intimacy which seems to me the most useful result of the late naturalistic movement in the theatre. For through the close contact with the spectator, who, metaphorically speaking, can feel the warm breath of dramatic art, the actor will be compelled to draw from the well of his deepest experience. There is no better proof of the genuineness of power and feeling exerted than to come successfully through this ordeal in this space before the said spectator.

"Of course it will come easiest to actors who possess a musical temperament, for music is inherent in human beings, and by music we may reach the heart of the vastest crowds. In the midst of the strongest accents of human passions, and the powerful logic of the dramatic struggle, which will always form the most important part of this side of theatrical art, pauses are imperative. It is the function of music to fill them in, either alone or in the form of the rhythmic chorus. By means of music this theatre will retain its dual character of the festive and the grave."

This then is the ideal of the Theatre of the Five

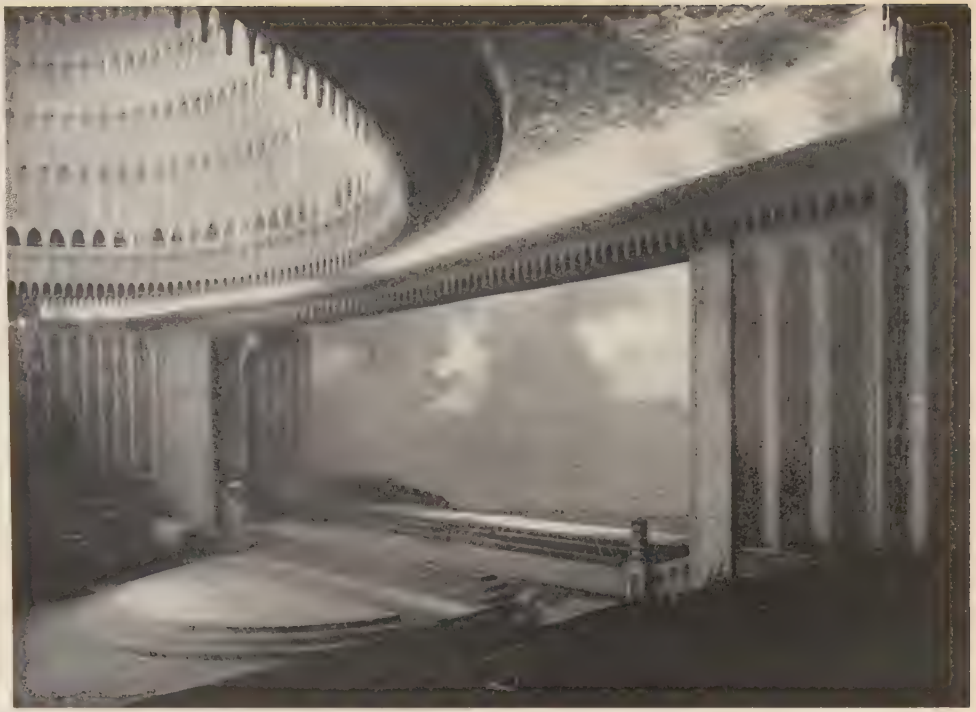
Thousand which may be presumed to dominate the Grosses Schauspielhaus, in which Reinhardt's desire for a new playhouse took its completest form. This huge building retains the elements of the circus performances and combines them with many features of the theatre



REINHARDT'S GROSSES SCHAUSPIELHAUS

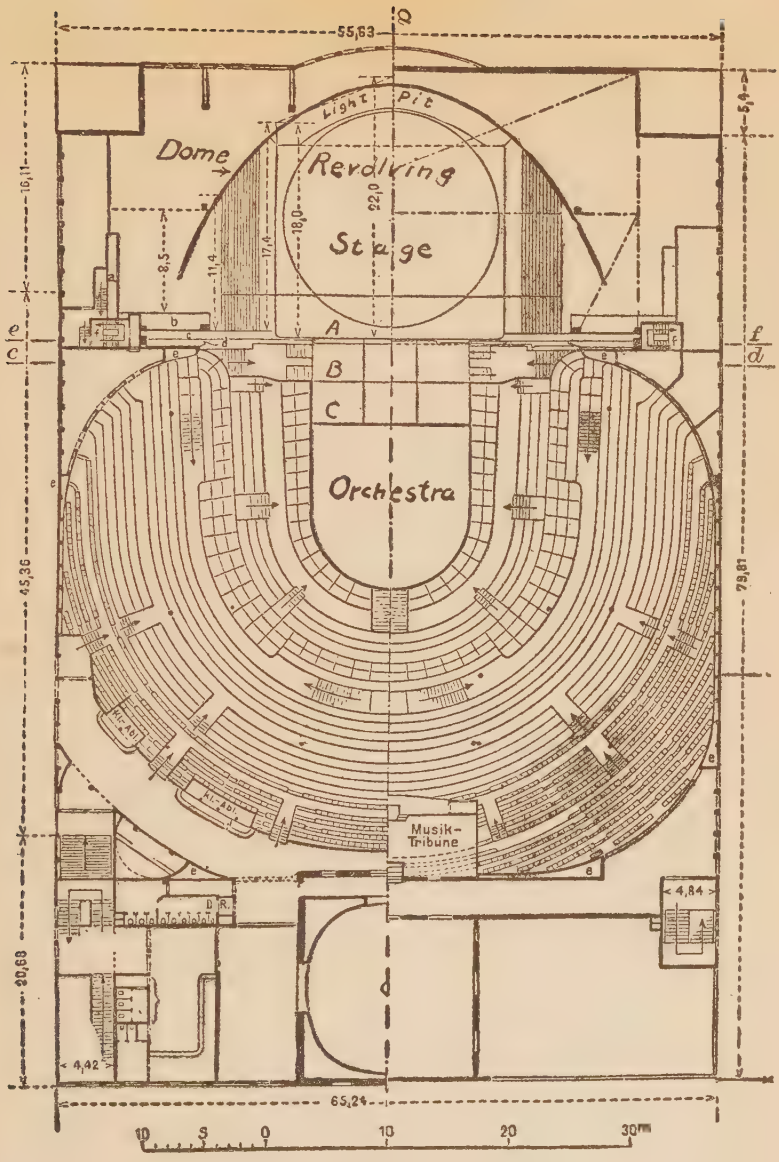
Showing the seating arrangement above the orchestra, in which the actors appear.

of the past. The audience, something over three thousand in number, is seated in one bank of seats surrounding the acting space. This space is first of all the orchestra, as in the ancient Greek theatre. There, upon the floor of the auditorium, in the midst of the spectators, passes much of the most intimate action and there the great mobs move. They gain access to this space



REINHARDT'S NEW CIRCUS-THEATRE

Interior of the Grosses Schauspielhaus in Berlin, looking across the orchestra toward the stage. The theatre has a complete equipment of dome and revolving stage, and various levels and steps may be arranged for the actors to reach the orchestra, in which the most important action takes place.



PLAN OF THE GROSSES SCHAUSPIELHAUS

The stage, the forestages A, B, and C, and the orchestra can be raised or lowered a number of feet at will. Hans Poelzig, architect.

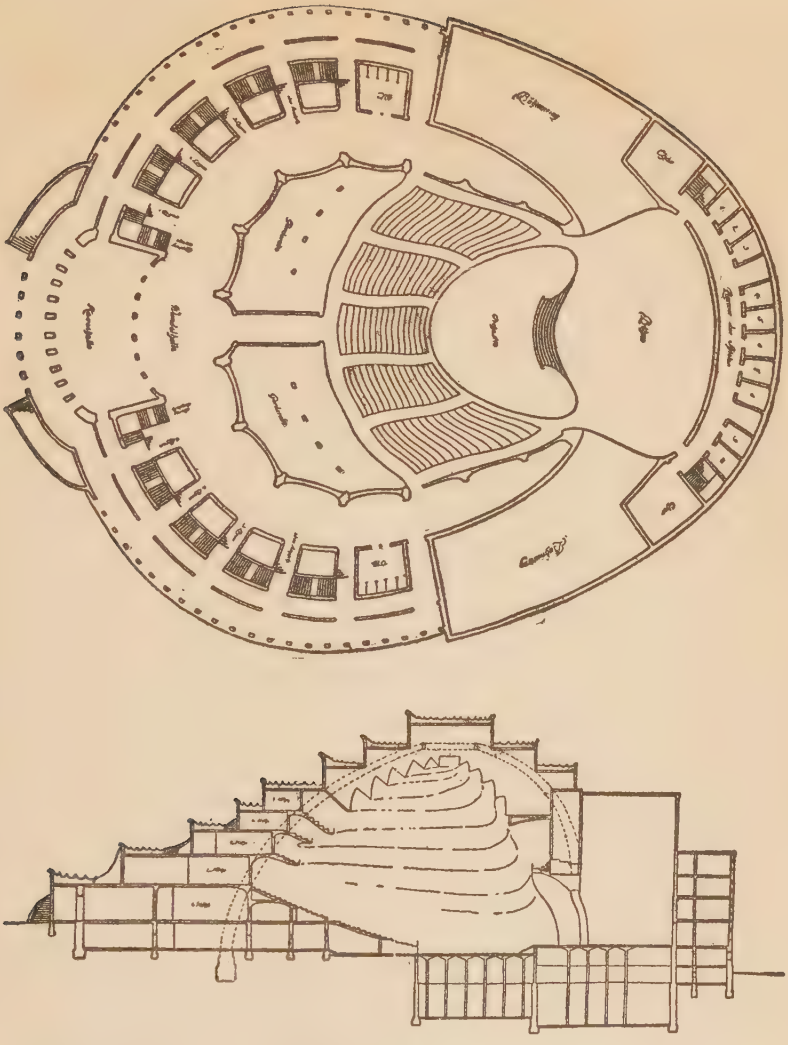
from runways passing beneath the seats of the audience and from portals near the stage proper. The stage itself is a huge affair, as large as any in common use in Berlin, and equipped with plaster dome, revolving stage and curtain. From the stage, which itself may be built up into various levels, steps and platforms lead down into the orchestra. Thus the house combines the essential feature of the Greek theatre, the orchestra in the midst of the spectators, with the essential feature of the modern theatre, the mechanically perfect stage.

Reinhardt's productions in the Grosses Schauspielhaus have ranged from *Œdipus* and *Orestes* to *Hamlet* and *Goetz von Berlichingen,* from Aristophanes to Hauptmann. One of his notable successes was Romain Rolland's *Danton,* the tremendous excitement of the final scene of the revolutionary tribunal—with the mob filling the orchestra and actors scattered even amongst the spectators—atoning for the inappropriateness of the two earlier scenes in Robespierre's and Desmoulins's rooms to the great distances of this theatre.

It is absurd to take the Grosses Schauspielhaus for a perfected specimen of the theatre of tomorrow. It is, on the face of it, too complete a compromise between the Greek theatre and the modern deep stage. The effects of frank and overpowering theatricalism which Reinhardt achieves in the orchestra tends to make much of his use of the inner stage and its scenery seem trifling. In this magnificently new building critics were

IN THE THEATRE OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

The scene of the revoluntionary tribunal in Romain Rolland's *Danton* as staged in Max Reinhardt's huge Grosses Schauspielhaus in Berlin, with the orchestra filled by the mob and actors springing up beside the spectators.



From The Theatre Arts Magazine

REINHARDT'S PROJECTED FESTSPIELHAUS

Plan and section of the theatre to be built in Salzburg after designs by Hanz Poelzig. The orchestra will be used by the actors as in the Grosses Schauspielhaus. The seats continue up over the foyers.

particularly annoyed by Reinhardt's foolish and trivial attempt to project real clouds upon the plaster dome in his production of *Julius Cæsar*. The final emphasis, however, should be on his tendency to desert the deep stage and play even interior scenes in the orchestra.

From this venture Reinhardt has gone on to plan a more perfect structure of the sort in a place where the temptation or the necessity of pandering to an untrained audience will be less than in Berlin. At Salzburg, in the Austrian Tyrol, is to be erected, if funds can be found in bankrupt Central Europe, a Festspielhaus or festival playhouse for the creation of new drama and new music-drama as well as the reinterpretation of the old. Reinhardt is to act as director, and with him, in residence in the old town, will be Hugo von Hofmannsthahl, the playwright, and Richard Strauss, the composer. Together these three will attempt to create a Bayreuth of the modern theatre.

The preliminary sketches which Hanz Poelzig, architect of the Grosses Schauspielhaus has made for the Salzburg project, picture a strange structure handled in the rococo style associated historically with Salzburg and its great artist, Mozart. Its central building, seating 2,000, will be connected with its smaller theatre, the Mozart Spielhaus, and with other portions of the park in which it is set, by winding, tentacle-like colonnades. The plan of the Festspielhaus calls for a smaller and less conventional stage than at the Grosses Schau-

spielhaus; orchestra and stage will be brought into closer harmony.

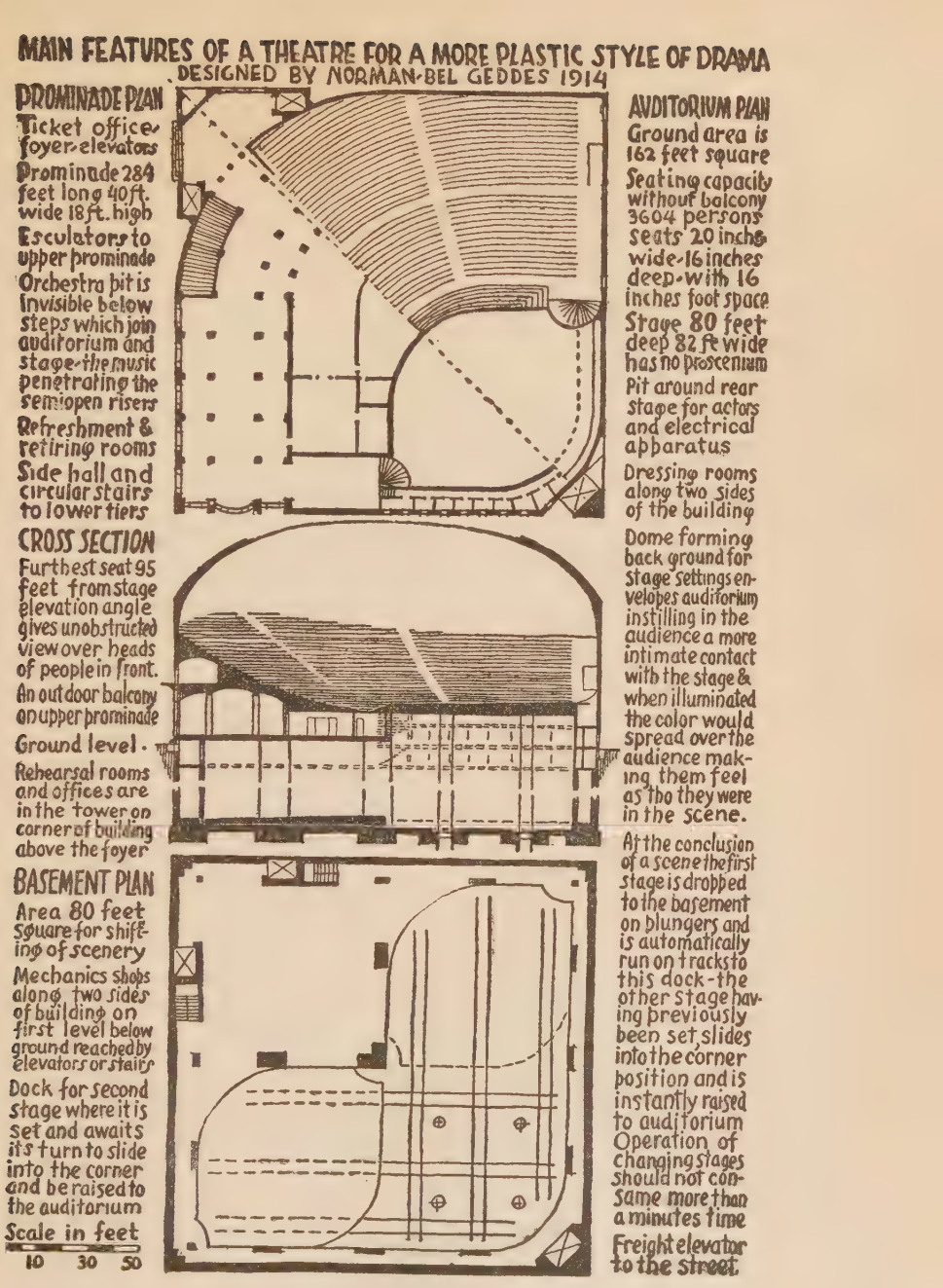
Attempts to create the new playhouse have been fewer outside Germany. In only one case, the case of Jacques Copeau and his Théâtre du Vieux Colombier, have they been notably successful; but in that case, I feel, in spite of no attempt to range wide or gain the splendid proportions of mass-action, the end has been most notably attained. The bare stage of Copeau has been brought to Berlin in the Tribune Theater.

The nearest parallel to Reinhardt for size and grandeur of conception—outside the frankly imitative productions of *Œdipe, roi de Thèbes* and of spectacles by Gémier in Paris—is the masque form and the open-air auditorium created by Percy MacKaye in America. In his *Masque of St. Louis* and his *Caliban,* MacKaye has gone far towards charting some of the essentials of the mass-theatre of the future. In these wind-blown and gigantic entertainments, he has reposed an unfortunate reliance on the spoken word and neither his verse nor his prose has had the simplicity and vigor that such a form of entertainment demands. But in his imagination he has seen truly the possibility of community drama, of magnificent communal spectacles fused of color and movement, art and humanity.

MacKaye is the natural inheritor of grand theatrical conceptions from an extraordinary father, Steele MacKaye. As I noted elsewhere, the elder MacKaye had

planned and partially built for the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 a gargantuan playhouse called the Spectatorium. In it was to be enacted a new form of drama composed of pantomime and music, words spoken and sung, called *The World Finder* and celebrating Columbus. Dvořák and Victor Herbert were to write the music. The building was to cover a space five hundred feet long by four hundred wide and was to be two hundred and seventy feet in height. The proscenium was to be a hundred and fifty feet by seventy, and the sky at the back of the stage four hundred by a hundred and twenty. The auditorium was to seat 10,000. By an unprecedented array of mechanical appliances, movable stages running on miles of tracks, water tanks, etc., all manner of gigantic scenes and "effects" were to be obtained. Financial difficulties prevented the completion of the Spectatorium; but a large model, called the Scenatorium, was completed and successfully exhibited before MacKaye's death in 1894.

Other minds in America have worked upon new forms for the theatre. Aline Barnsdall, for the new theatre which she planned to build in Los Angeles, called in America's most progressive and originating architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. The preliminary designs called for an auditorium like none yet built. The proscenium was to be adjustable and movable; the back of the stage a dome curving out into the lines of the house. Wright designed a permanent architectural



A THEATRE WITHOUT A PROSCENIUM

Descriptive plans of Geddes' projected playhouse, with the stage contained in one corner of the auditorium. In the upper plan the left-hand lower half represents the promenade level; the right-hand upper half, the auditorium level immediately above. The stage, in the right-hand lower corner, sinks into the basement for a change of setting.

background in a wall about twelve feet high running parallel to the dome and a short distance from it.

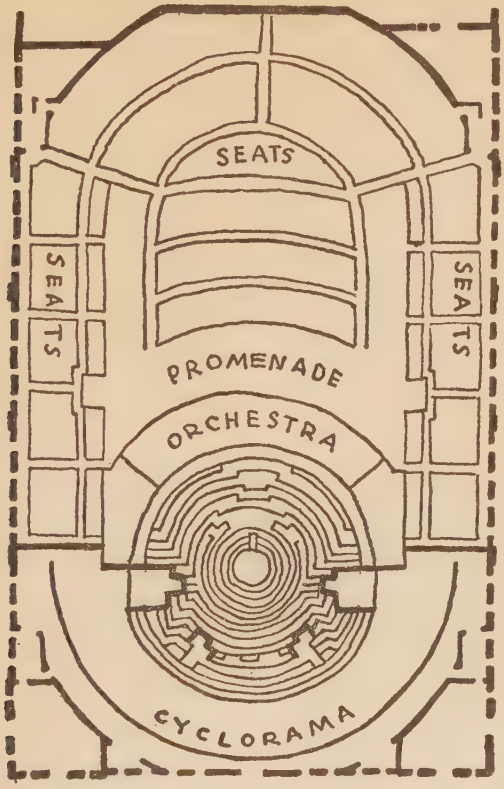
Norman-Bel Geddes, the young and brilliant designer, made almost his first contribution to the stage a plan for a great playhouse of even more remarkable design. In his scheme, devised in 1917, the stage was to become a part of the auditorium. The audience, seated diagonally from corner to corner of the great domed hall, were to look upon simple set-pieces, plastic units, architectural details, appearing in the opposite corner of the structure. Behind these objects the curving wall—which could be illuminated as a sky-dome—would reach outward and upward until it disappeared in the darkness of the house. During the brief intermissions, while the theatre was plunged in darkness, the section of the floor containing the setting would be lowered into the basement, the setting and its rolling platform shoved aside and another setting, already prepared, wheeled into place and raised immediately, with the actors upon it, up into the theatre above.

In 1921, upon the six hundredth anniversary of the death of Dante, Geddes set to work upon almost as ambitious a project, the presentation of *The Divine Comedy* as a great drama of light and words in Madison Square Garden. Here he schemed to build a gigantic and adroitly curving pit of many levels, surrounded on three sides by the audience, and rising on

THE DIVINE COMEDY—ARRANGEMENTS BY GEDDES

Two of Norman-Bel Geddes's sketches to show different arrangements of lights and people during the progress of a dramatization of Dante. The design of the permanent stage upon which this is accomplished is shown in diagrams on pages 205 and 206. Above, Dante and Virgil on the edge of the pit of Hell. Below, Purgatory. Upon two plinths on either side, actors hold canvas shapes that form the outlines of devilish or of angelic wings.

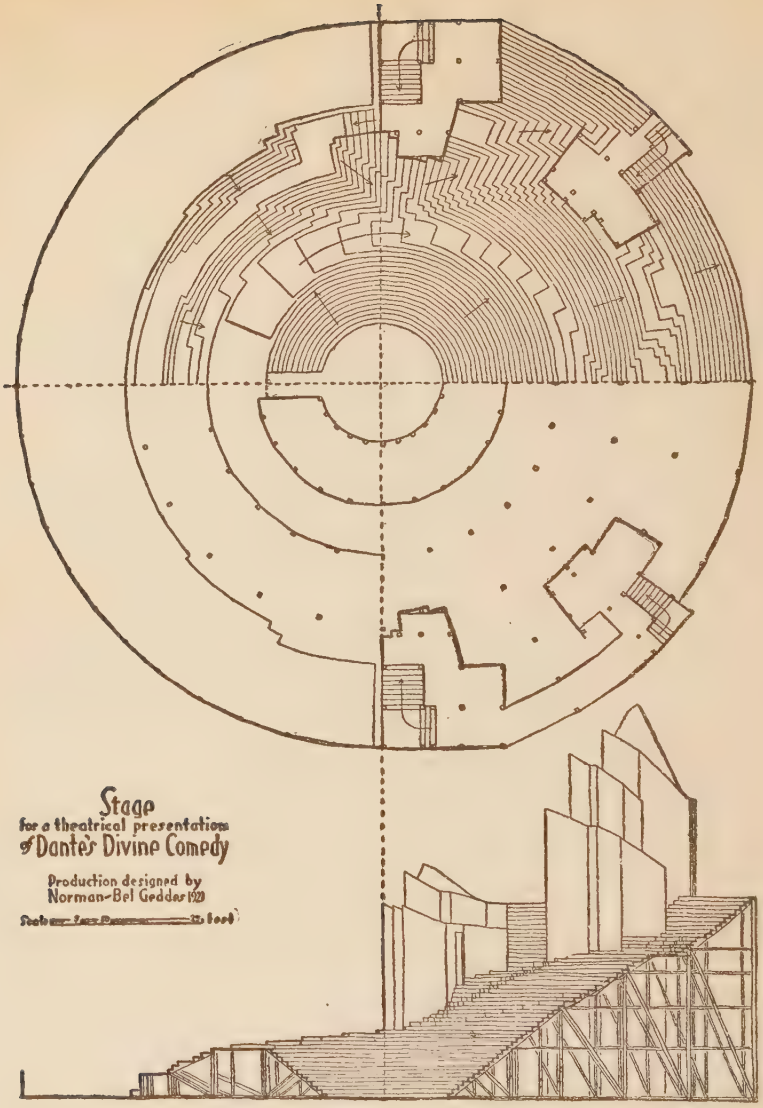
the fourth against a gauze background which would finally be brilliantly stained by the light of paradise.



PLAN FOR THE DIVINE COMEDY

Madison Square Garden as arranged by Norman-Bel Geddes for his proposed production of Dante's *Divine Comedy.*

Upon each side of the pit next to the gauze would stand two gigantic plinths upon which, in mysterious lights and silhouettes, men would pose great demoniacal



THE STAGE FOR THE DIVINE COMEDY

Plan and section of the curious, doughnut-shaped structure upon which the action of Geddes' projected production would pass. The plinths or towers are to be occupied by actors carrying huge wings and other decorations. Note the position of this stage in the plan of Madison Square Garden on page 205. The arrows indicate rising steps.

From The Theatre Arts Magazine.

THEATRES DESIGNED BY HERMAN ROSSE

Above, an adaptation of the huge Coliseum Building, Chicago, proposed for the production of a nativity play. The audience is seated all round the circular stage, which is encircled by transparent scenery lighted from the inside and therefore only visible on the side opposite the spectator. Below, a novel arrangement of forestage and proscenium with "projected scenery" used as a background.

wings or angelic pinions appropriate to the progress of Dante through the infernal and celestial regions.

Another American artist, the Dutch expatriate, Herman Rosse, has dreamed of new playhouses. His first approach is architectural. Rosse has spent much time and energy on schemes for uniting the lines of the proscenium opening of a theatre with the lines of the house, for bringing a real artistic unity into the architecture of the auditorium. He has gone beyond this to the designing of stages with new and beautiful approaches—doors set in the proscenium itself; "flowery ways," leading along the sides of the auditorium till they merge with a stage flung out in graceful curves beyond the confines of our footlights; steps down from the stage to the floor of the auditorium; the stage itself divided in ingenious ways by walls, pillars or screens of patterned color to make a background for the play.

Rosse conceives "the pure structural beauty of an unadorned building, a beautifully finished platform," as sufficient for the mounting of many of the finest plays now written or to be written. The new playhouse, as Rosse sees it, "will probably lead by way of a slow development of the purely constructive stage and the oratory platform to a new type of churchlike theatre with reflecting domes, beautiful materials, beautiful people—to a revitalizing of art by a complete reversal from the artificial to the living real."

To reduce the problem to its simplest terms, one

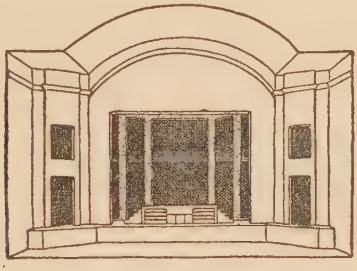
can see in such a vaudeville theatre as Proctor's in Mount Vernon, N. Y., the possibility of creating this theatre of the "living real," with the actor presented frankly as the actor with the simplest of detail about him. Forget the stage. Reduce it to a mere wall of fabric running almost where the curtain or the motion picture screen stands today, and broken for fifteen feet in the centre by an opening in which to set properties or through which (for exterior scenes) to catch a glimpse of a plaster dome of rather modest size. Bulge out the apron in a wide curve at the centre and in lesser and lower curves at the ends, where the boxes are now. Open the doors of the boxes upon these demi-aprons by means of steps, and from balcony windows above bend a stairway gracefully along the wall towards the stage. There—close knit with the wide and steep auditorium —is a fair beginning toward some new stage of intimacy and capacity, reality and imagination.

Jacques Copeau began his theatre as directly from something already in existence. He did not expect to make great reforms in stage or auditorium. He merely wanted to utilize fully the miserably tiny hall that his small resources could afford. It had no room for "effects" for all the paraphernalia of the normal stage. That did not matter. Copeau was more intent upon the actor. Accordingly he and his artist-architect completely cleared out the wings and old picture frame. In their stead, they installed a permanent architectural

JACQUES COPEAU'S PERMANENT STAGE

Two productions at the Théâtre du Vieux Colombier in Paris, each utilizing the same general system of balcony and stairs, which are built permanently into one end of the auditorium with forestage and steps. There is no proscenium. Above, a scene from *Twelfth Night.* Below, *La Surprise de l'Amour.*

setting at the back, a sort of balcony reached by flights of steps, and fairly convertible into whatever Copeau needed in background and superstructure. Or if he did not need it, it disappeared behind hangings or simple walls held in ingenious columns. At the sides there was no proscenium, merely doors in the theatre wall with a forestage between. Then, for his lively handling of comedy, he returned to the middle of his stage the *treteau* or low platform of the old come-



COPEAU'S STAGE IN NEW YORK

dians. All this—balcony, back wall, portals, forestage, *treteau*—was frankly and honestly worked in as extensions to the rest of the house through design and color. Here was an instrument of natural and definite structure, yet fluid enough to permit of reshapings that gave *Les Frères Karamazov* from Dostoyevsky and *Twelfth Night* in the same theatre.

This scheme of playhouse Copeau achieved again when the war sent him to New York as the ambassador of French culture—ten years ahead of his time. He

made over the Garrick Theatre in loose imitation of the stage that had come by necessity in Paris, and the results were admirable and right. Back again in Paris the integrity of his theatre has carried Jacques Copeau to a success that even the boulevards may envy. And I am not disinclined to believe that it was the new playhouse that had a very great deal to do with it; for the new playhouse was an expression of his own feeling for the fresh demands of the time, a reaction against antiquated mechanism.

Copeau's playhouse is the most complete, studied and yet natural experiment; Reinhardt's the most ambitious. Neither is necessarily conclusive. They are tentative. Their significance is, however, prophetic of a home for the new play.

Part Three

THE NEW PLAY

CHAPTER XIV.

A THEATRE WITHOUT PLAYS.

IT is a curious and significant fact that almost all the energies of the new movement in the theatre in the past twenty-five years have gone into the study and the development of production methods and not into the writing of plays. We have had a new stagecraft and no new drama; a new dress but no body for it to clothe. The commonest jibe of the critics of the new stagecraft has been that it neglects the heart of the theatre, the play, and concentrates upon gauds that have no intrinsic worth and no enduring quality. Its opponents recall the attacks of the disgruntled playwright, Ben Jonson, upon the first great English scenic artist, Inigo Jones, for whose court masques he had written librettos: "Painting and carpentry are the soul of Masque."

Shakespeare . . . Inigo Jones. Even friends of the new stagecraft have quailed a little before those opposed names. Are we following the carpenters instead of the poets? Is Gordon Craig the prophet of a god with feet of *papier-mâché?* Shakespeare played his eternal dramas on sunlit hustings. Inigo Jones cre-

ated his mechanical marvels out of all the resources of a royal court. Shakespeare's productions—if you can call them that—cost but a few pounds; Jones's cost thousands. Yet Shakespeare lives today, while Craig worries the problem of how to create a "durable theatre." Can the artists make it without playwrights? Can they make it even if they are given poets? The final disquietude of all lovers of the new and imaginative art of production has been the thought that when Inigo Jones got hold of a real creator the outcome was the same as when he bossed some tuppenny rhymster. The genius of Ben Jonson was crushed beneath the canvas tomb of *The Masque of Blackness.*

"Shakespeare, 1554-1616 . . . Inigo Jones, 1573-1652."

Here is hope: Inigo Jones came after the great days; Robert E. Jones may be coming before them. Decadence requires something ripe enough to decay; something great enough to make a descent evident. Decadence is a difficult feat for an art that has not known the heights. We have had Ibsen and Strindberg, giants in their way, and lesser men absorbed with lesser lives. I can only believe that the crushing oppression of nineteenth century industrialism held them all bowed, and that if they could have found release from the desperate and cruel sense of human slavery they would have sought more surely the heights of the spirit. I can only affirm that the new stagecraft, had it come earlier,

would have aided in their release, and that it is to play a great part in the release of our future playwrights. Or perhaps it is nearer the truth to say that the new stagecraft came as the first indication in the theatre of the lifting of that sense of oppression which debased the nineteenth century literature even while it sought to escape.

Undeniably, American, English and French producers working along the road of imagination and spiritual truth have had to go back of the peep-show drama of the last fifty years, and back of the drear mediocrity of the two centuries before, to find plays free enough in feeling and movement and large enough in inner significance to match the art and ideas they wanted to bring to the stage. Even the German producers have faced a similar situation, but one not quite so bad. They, too, have had to flee from realism mainly to the classics. Yet their classics have included not only the Greeks and Shakespeare and Molière, but also Schiller, Goethe, Grillparzer; and even in the midst of the German's parody of French naturalism, there was native drama that sought large meanings and heroic emotions. Hauptmann wrote *Hannele* two years after *Lonely Lives, The Sunken Bell* two years before *Drayman Henschel, Henry of Auë* almost in the same year as *Rosa Berndt* and the "cosmic puppet play," *Das Festspiel* the year after *Gabriel Schilling's Flight.* Throughout Germany, between 1900 and 1915, there

were plays like von Hofmannsthahl's *Electra,* Hardt's *Tantris der Narr,* Molnar's *Liliom,* Heyse's *Mary of Magdala.* And the German public was willing that its producers should go to France for Maeterlinck, to Belgium for Verhaeren, to Italy for D'Annunzio. This tendency to keep alive some measure of imagination did much to stimulate the German artists and producers; but it is still true that even in Germany the new stagecraft fell back upon the classics for material worthy of its efforts and capable of developing the best that was in it.

Even in the classics the new art of the theatre has found no thorough satisfaction of its urge to creation. Outside Germany, Shakespeare and the Greeks are acted too seldom to supply the artists with much of an opportunity. Everywhere the classics are encrusted with traditions and the public mind bound by preconceptions of them. These traditions are hard to demolish, these preconceptions are dangerous things to fight. In commenting on the fact that "the new art of the theatre has so far failed conspicuously in devising new plays to fit more closely its new and peculiar needs," Walter Prichard Eaton wrote truly in *The Theatre Arts Magazine:* "Falling back on Shakespeare, it is actually losing as much as it gains, for while it gains a play of imaginative power and majestic poetry, it also has to combat the tremendous dead weight of tradition, the inbred ideas of an au-

dience about that play running in a totally different channel." So far as the common run of plays goes, the new stagecraft could give much, of course, to the realistic drama, as has been demonstrated even in America in such productions as *The Devil's Garden, The Power of Darkness* and *John Ferguson;* but it could draw little or nothing from them. If the enemy of the new stagecraft cares to push his comparison of Inigo Jones and Shakespeare to the point of balancing the work of the stage designers and directors of modern Germany, Russia and America against the work of the realistic playwrights, I for one am prepared to maintain that the work of the artists has been healthier art than the work of the playwrights, finer, higher, more inspiriting. The line, mass, and color of Robert Edmond Jones can do more to liberate man from slavery to machines and to their owners than all the social dramas of modern England. Jones's art liberates the soul; the propagandist's labor stimulates only the mind.

Yet in spite of this essential health in the new stagecraft, in spite of the classics to draw upon as a substitute for the drama of realism and as a supplement to the small body of imaginative drama, the partizans of the new methods of production must see and admit that the new stagecraft has gone only a small part of the way towards reanimating the theatre, and that it

cannot claim to have done so until playwrights come forward or are driven forward to stand beside it.

I might plausibly claim that this will happen because the new stagecraft and the new playhouse which it is evolving happen to be efficient instruments that must attract the playwright and cause him to write in a style suited to their exigencies. This is not so very presumptuous a claim. Before this, playwrights have conformed to physical theatres. In fact, they have done little else. Brander Matthews has demonstrated this completely and convincingly in the third chapter of his *Study of the Drama.* He cites the conditions of the Greek theatre and shows how they inevitably called for plays written as Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides wrote them. He does the same for the Elizabethan theatre, showing that the form of Shakespeare's plays depended on the type of playhouse he had to write for. And the same for Molière, and the rest of the playwrights down to our own day, ending with Edison's incandescent bulb dictating to the realists.

There is one modification to be made, however. It recalls the old problem of which came first, the hen or the egg. Broadly considered, there were no theatres before there were plays, and no plays before there were playwrights. On the other hand, the playwrights of our ten different historical structures called the Theatre did not begin by saying: "Go to, I must have

a play acted. In each beginning there was a rudimentary playhouse and a rudimentary play concealed in the impulse towards dramatic expression which infected a little group of men. They began to give this impulse expression in some form that linked a technique of presentation (or rudimentary stage) with a set of verbal and bodily evolutions (or a rudimentary play). Then came more conscious creators who saw the possibilities of the stage and extended the form of the play to utilize them.

It is of the highest significance, however, that the first creative playwrights, in many cases the greatest playwrights, were actor-playwrights. The men who most quickly and most fully saw the possibilities inherent in their theatre—Shakespeare and Molière are classic examples—belonged to that very sensitive type of theatrical worker, the player.

I stress this point because it is of importance when we go beyond the business of granting that the new stagecraft and the new playhouse exist, and believing that, by the example of theatrical history, the playwright will utilize them. If we look for the reason of the coming of the new art of the theatre, and the reason why the new playwright has not developed more quickly, as he did in other theatres, we stumble upon a theory in which the sensitiveness of the various factors in modern production plays a tremendous part. To me, this theory explains the coming of the new art

of the theatre through the designer first, the producer next, and the playwright last of all.

I cannot escape the conviction that there is something inherently and humanly mystical in the coming of a new movement in art. It seems quite literally the product of a *Zeitgeist.* Perhaps it is better to say that the movement and the *Zeitgeist* are identical. The moving cause and the creators through whom it moves are members one of another. This alone explains the simultaneity of creation and the lightning-like spread of idea and will.

The application to the new art of the theatre is this: Here we have a general movement; it does not first present itself through a single creative and dominant mind and then by its attractiveness conquer other minds. While realism is in the height of its growth we find the ideas of the new stagecraft expressing themselves in half a dozen places. Of these primary expressions in the nineties there were, among others, Perfall, director of the Munich Royal Court Theatre graphic artists like Anselm Feuerbach and Henry Wilson, stage designers and theorists like Adolphe Appia and Gordon Craig. And soon Max Reinhardt, Meyerhold, Fuchs, Martersteig, Hagemann, Rouché, all producers, were laboring with artists like Stern, Roller, Walser, Starke, Wirk, Sievert, Erler, Leffler, Czeschka.

Why should this *Zeitgeist* touch first of all a figure

of such slight importance hitherto in the theatre, the artist? It was not so in the past. The reason, I believe, is twofold. First this impulse touched the artist as no theatrical impulse towards the theatre had touched him in the past because graphic artists had never been so plentiful in numbers or so free to receive and act upon impulse as at the end of the nineteenth century, and because the new movement, like every other movement in our theatre except the realistic movement, had a place for him.

The second and more significant reason for the *Zeitgeist's* finding its initial expression through the artist is because the artist is the most sensitive directive factor in the theatre. The actor is as sensitive in temperament, perhaps more sensitive. But the actor is not, like the artist, the director, or the playwright, a responsible directive factor. The actor alone through all the centuries has never failed the theatre. He does not fail it now; it largely neglects him. When the artist and the director wake up to the necessity of drawing the actor more closely and more completely into the picture, of expressing through him the vigors of abstract design and direction, the actor will respond. He is always ready to respond, and to respond to the limit of the human spirit, if he is given the opportunity. But he does not direct effort. He receives direction. When he does begin to direct, he ceases to be an actor; he becomes a director, a producer. To do this, which

is a very complicated piece of work, requiring great executive ability, he must have a quality in him not so sensitive as the pure actor's nature. It is not so sensitive as the artist's either, for the artist does his work to a great extent by himself or in loose coöperation with others. Therefore, for practical purposes of expression, the *Zeitgeist* may be said to skip the pure actor, and seize first on the artist, and second on the actor-director. If the actor should become playwright, as he once used to do, or if the playwright could regain the sensitiveness and closeness to the theatre which he enjoyed when he was also an actor, the *Zeitgeist* would not so long ignore either.

The spirit of the new art of the theatre has played for twenty or thirty years upon the artists and directors. It is beginning to play upon that remoter factor, the dramatist. Already we may note, in many directions —in the decay of "construction" and the disuse of the three-act and four-act form, in the emergence of older forms, many scenes, the soliloquy, rhythmic prose or verse—signs that the playwright is deserting the old technique of realism. He is passing through a transitional stage beyond which lies the new play.

CHAPTER XV.

THE TWILIGHT OF REALISM.

THE history of the nineteenth century is the history of the rise of realism. It is also the history of the development of a dramatic form never before known to the theatre, a form fitted with peculiar appropriateness both to the substance of realism and to the peep-show playhouse in which realism got its birth—the play of three or four acts, each and often all of them passing in a single scene. The substance of nineteenth century drama is realism; its form is the "well constructed play." Both the substance and the form are disappearing under the pressure upon the playwrights of the *Zeitgeist* of imaginative beauty and spiritual power, which is first to be observed in the insurgence of the ideas of the new stagecraft between 1890 and 1900.

It is easy to quarrel with the attack of the new theatre upon realism, because realism has become all things to all men. To me realism is just one thing: an absorption with the ephemeral exterior of the time in which we live. There might, perhaps, be a realism of the seventeenth century—a surface picture of the

days of Addison; it would hardly fall within my definition and my damnation because it would not suffer the worst fault of the realism I write of—the fault of telling us the trivial things that we know already. There might be, and in fact there is a realism of our own which gives us the ephemeral exterior but which goes so much deeper for the substance of its art that it has values which are, as near as we can measure them, eternal. This is the realism of Ibsen at his best in *Rosmersholm* or our own O'Neill in portions of *Beyond the Horizon.* Such playwrights have selected their material not to imitate life but to illumine it. Their work has a genuine place in dramatic literature. We are turning away, however, even from their high realism because we are seeking an intense inner vision of spiritual reality which will push the selective process so far that to call the result realism will be an absurdity. We are rushing off to other lands and other times, partly out of a desire to escape the dullness of our inferior realism and partly to begin in unfamiliar surroundings an exploration of the ultimate spiritual values which we will later be able to apply to our own life. Realism of the higher type will continue for a long time in our theatre, but with it will come a growing body of plays that foreswear its materials and its dramaturgy.

The nineteenth century's glorification of theatrical technique may be traced to its beginnings in the forties

with the shallow, intricate plays of Scribe, the exploiter of the *pièce bien faite.* Realism—the absorption in the surface effects of life at the expense of spiritual understanding—had its start in the fifties with the problem plays of Augier and Dumas *fils,* and the invention of the *raisonneur* by Barrière in 1853. "Naturalism" came in the sixties and seventies with the de Goncourts, Zola and Daudet; it was a conscious photography of low-life glorying in the fatuous delusion that it was unedited by the hand of its creator. Realism reached full dignity and integrity only in 1879 when Ibsen wrote *A Doll's House.* The late eighties saw Strindberg beginning his vitalistic contributions with *The Father, Comrades,* and *Miss Julia.* The "free theatre" movement of the nineties and its impact on the commercial stage brought realism to its peak of popularity in Porto-Riche, Brieux, Becque, Hervieu, Donnay, de Curel, Lavedan, Holz, Hauptmann, Halbe, Hartleben and Sudermann. Rather belatedly two English playwrights discovered the French drama and forth came the plays of Arthur Wing Pinero and Henry Arthur Jones. Within the year when the tortured soul of Ibsen was trying in *When We Dead Awaken* to soar beyond the limits of realism which his mind had set up, Pinero was writing *The Gay Lord Quex* and Jones *Mrs. Dane's Defense.*

With the last stages of the realistic movement, which was, like so much of the nineteenth century literature,

fundamentally a product of the industrial subjection of this hideous period, went rebellions against both the rule of the machine and the rule of its philosophers and its chasteners. Maeterlinck, imbued with the reaction of the symbolist poets of France in the nineties; Rostand, the absolutist in the theatre, a law unto himself; D'Annunzio and Bennelli, true to the fervid romance of their race; Verhaeren, from Belgium, von Hofmannsthahl, from Germany, produced dramas that could only be interpreted fitly by such artists of the theatre as were slowly developing round the ideas of the new stagecraft. In the face of a public still absorbed in peeping at its own face in the mirror, great realists like Strindberg and Hauptmann did not fear to write in a subliminal vein. Tchehoff broke from the plot-technique of realism while he abided by its act-form, and sought spiritual deeps within the proscenium of the Moscow Art Theatre. Shaw, the propagandist, smashed whatever icons of dramaturgy he pleased, and hobnobbed with Napoleon and Cleopatra and Cæsar, while Wedekind played the mischief with German naturalism in a fashion that we could only describe as expressionism today. Yet for all this the whole spirit of the modern European stage remained realistic practically up to 1910; and its form, the stiff set of pigeonholes into which Ibsen managed to cram so much emotion.

The significant thing in the theatre of today is not

the advent of new Maeterlincks, new D'Annunzios; they are hardly the playwrights for whom the new theatre is looking. The significant thing is the breakdown of realism in form and content, and the beginning of free, faint gropings towards a reality behind life.

From 1900 on, the complaint of those enamored with the theatre of Jones and Pinero (until then the only theatre of realism which America had actually known) has been of the decay of what they please to call the dramatic form. Our dramas, they say, have become invertebrate. They are no more than "a disarray of situations that demand mere attention and defy comprehension." The first act no longer states a situation which the following two or three acts develop and solve. Plots are carelessly developed or else cast aside in favor of a loose collection of more or less unrelated scenes.

The indictment is true. It is also hopeful. We are suffering now from the faults of any period of transition, but at least we are on the way from a narrow form and a narrow content towards freer expression and the sharper and deeper understanding which this form may win. Giving up structure, we often get merely sensation or topical humor; but often enough we come upon closer characterization and larger meaning. In the future we should go further.

Of the breakdown in construction there can be no

doubt. Slow as America is in its pursuit of Europe, it has been no laggard in demolishing the best rules of realism. Perhaps it is the natural impulse of a youthful literature; beginners learn as little of the past as possible, and sense very quickly the things that are to be of small use to them. The decay of the realistic dramatic form is as evident in the popular American stage of the past ten years as it has been in Europe. Perhaps it is more general and more marked.

I cannot but believe that the future of the theatre lies in America; and I think that the natural tendency of any man to reserve for his own people the perfecting of an art to which he is ardently devoted is strengthened in this case by the position of the United States in world politics, which means world industrialism. America is today the burgeoning people. In the face of the industrial and political revolution into which Europe is slipping, America seems likely to lean far towards the reactionary for some years to come, to grow more centralized, more mechanistic, to embark upon the pursuit of empire. Those are the tendencies which one must recognize who looks with a general eye at America today. Those are also the tendencies which have made great drama in every age of the theatre except the realistic; and I am not unwilling to maintain that whatever the realistic age has produced it has not produced great drama in the finest sense. Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides wrote when Athens

was headed for the *débâcle* that followed Sparta's challenge to her imperialism. Shakespeare wrote when Drake was making England the greatest sea power in history, and when her discoverers were founding her empire overseas. Racine, Corneille and Molière were ornaments of the court of the Grand Monarch. It would even be possible to find some traces of Germany's urge towards hegemony in the activity of her theatres and their architects, producers and artists, if not so markedly in her playwrights, during the reign of Wilhelm von Hohenzollern. If wealth and dominion in industry are to flow to America in answer to an inner urge and an outward opportunity, dominion in the theatre is quite as likely to be another outlet of its burgeoning spirit.

The course of the breakdown of the realistic dramatic form can be traced with uncommon clearness in the ordinary commercial productions of Broadway between 1912 and 1914. One need hardly begin with *Everywoman,* the flaccid parody of *Everyman,* which came to the old Herald Square Theatre in the winter of 1911; in two seasons there is plenty of evidence. Recalling for the moment that Molnar's eight-scened *Liliom,* which takes its rough-neck hero to heaven and back again, was then hardly off its author's desk; that Dymow had lately written his *Nju* in thirteen scenes and that it was achieving great success in Russia, and that the death of Tolstoy in 1910 had disclosed

The Living Corpse, which, cut down from thirteen scenes to ten, was to achieve success in New York two years later, we can list among the noteworthy productions on Broadway in 1912-13 Schnitzler's *Anatol,* a series of one-act plays; Shaw's *Fanny's First Play,* a play-within-a-play; Bennett's *Milestones,* leaping from generation to generation, and the Benrimo-Hazelton *Yellow Jacket,* a drama in Chinese form. With the next season American playwrights were leading in experimentation. For foreign oddities there were Bennett's *Great Adventure* in six symetrically arranged scenes and the Rostand *fils Good Little Devil* skipping about in fairyland. Arthur Hopkins signalized his entry into theatrical management with Eleanor Gate's odd and ingenious dream-play, *The Poor Little Rich Girl,* and Edward Sheldon wrote another play-within-a-play in *Romance.* These contradictions of the rules by which Pinero lived shared the season's honors with that excellent trick-melodrama by George M. Cohan and Earl Derr Biggers, *Seven Keys to Baldpate.* The next year, in *Under Cover,* a play about a thief who turned out to be a detective, Roi Cooper Megrue broke the strictest rule of all—that an author must keep no secrets from his audience—and let loose upon the American stage a flood of trick plays and guessing contests that culminated in such so-called "murder mysteries," as *The Thirteenth Chair, At 8:45, A Voice in the Dark, The Crimson*

Alibi and *The Bat*. The production by Arthur Hopkins in association with Cohan & Harris of *On Trial*, by Elmer Rice, signalized the impact of motion picture story-telling methods on our stage. Here was a plot told backward, beginning with the trial of the accused, then showing successively the crime, the events preceding the crime and the cause of the crime buried in incidents ten or fifteen years before. Thereafter the same device, intermittent "flashbacks," simultaneous action, and many other methods for avoiding the orderly unknotting of a plot in three or four tight-packed and progressive acts, appeared again and again in the plays of Broadway.

With the development of freak plays has also gone almost as marked a divergence from past procedure in the increase in the number of scenes. For a time realism clung tenaciously to the pleasures to be derived from a plot that falls into long, steadily cumulative scenes; it even reached on occasion—in *The Servant in the House* and *Swords*—the unity of time, place and action which Aristotle rather erroneously imagined belonged to the Greek dramas, broken as they were by choruses that might have separated their scenes leagues and hours but for the continuous nature of religious ritual. The virtues of three tight, taut acts have now lost some of their attractiveness. The habit of using only three or four settings for the unfolding of a plot was partly a product of the difficulties

of scene shifting when realism must make the backgrounds as heavy as the dialogue; it also sprang, of course, from the difficulty of drawing much emotional or spiritual sustenance from a literal picture of life without forcing a good deal of action and a good many people into a single long scene. As with any form, there was pleasure to be derived from watching the mastery of it. But such pleasure palls; realism has palled with it, and the conceptions and devices of the new stagecraft have made rapid change of scene a simple matter of either mechanics or design. Accordingly, playwrights of the past few years have permitted themselves the freedom of six, seven, a dozen scenes, and more and more the reward has been a closer glimpse of the true inner lives of men and women than the writers could have accomplished in the older form.

Europe and America have shared in this tendency towards more scenes. Galsworthy, hardly to be thought of as anything but a realist in spite of his *Little Dream,* has written few dramas under the old restriction; *The Silver Box, A Bit o' Love, Justice* and *The Mob* have six scenes; *The Skin Game* and *The Fugitive* have five. Arnold Bennett is fancy-free; his *Great Adventure* goes to the length of six scenes in its telling. Over on the Continent there is Franz Molnar, who gives *Liliom* eight scenes and divides his dream play, *The Phantom Rival* (*Das Märchen des Wolfes*) into seven episodes. Wedekind began in

The Awakening of Spring with eighteen scenes. Tolstoy's *Redemption* has thirteen; Ossip Dymow's *Nju* has as many. I refrain from a long and tedious catalog of many-scened plays, ending with dozens of Broadway successes in which curtains fall to break acts in half, and other acts shift three times in a merry chase about New York.

I will merely point out that when Eugene O'Neill —at first an arch-realist in his one-act plays, though a realist whose art bit deeper than the surface—turned to the writing of long plays, his first ran in six scenes; and that he followed the success of this with *The Emperor Jones,* a remarkable study, in eight scenes, of racial and subconscious fears, and proceeded to dramatize in ten scenes one of the oldest of race-myths in a play of the Spanish exploration.

Beside the breakdown of the Ibsen play-form in America, we must also place a tendency to depart from the surface and the content of realism itself. In the great mass of popular plays there has always been little of true realism except its outward show; that little is growing less. The costume play—a recipe for failure ten years ago when the breakdown of the realistic form began here—has forged forward of late years to a surprising extent. We have had the costume play before, notably in the dramas of the type of *When Knighthood Was in Flower* twenty years ago, but we were then no part of the general world-theatre, and

our realism had hardly reached the Pinero stage. The rapier melodrama was simply a fashion of the English-speaking stage. This was stock-romance. We did not roam foreign lands and other times, as we do now, "for to admire and for to see."

Now, after a thorough dosage of small-town comedies and crook melodramas and also a little Shaw, Tolstoy and Ibsen, we find that we can voyage anywhere with impunity. The cut of costumes and color of scenery make no difference on the income side of the manager's books, whatever they may do to the expenses of production. Here again cataloging would be equally tiresome for writer and reader. Let us consider merely the plays of other lands or other times, all of them picturesque, which crossed the Broadway stage in 1920-21. Among the successes of the season appear these plays of picturesque setting: *Deburau,* Paris of 1828; *Spanish Love,* Spain of today; *Little Old New York,* Manhattan in 1820; *The Tavern,* any time, anywhere; *The Bad Man,* the Mexican border today; *The Broken Wing,* Mexico, today; *Mecca,* the Orient, some hundreds of years ago; *The Prince and the Pauper,* Tudor England; *The Emperor Jones,* the West Indies, today; *The Green Goddess,* the Himalayas today; a revival of *Romance,* New York of fifty years ago; *Liliom,* Budapest and Heaven, from 1907 to date. Among the less successful plays, some of them failures, are *Clair de Lune,* eighteenth cen-

tury, France; *Mary Stuart,* Scotland in 1565; *Thy Name is Woman,* Spain of today. Of these, two at least were profitable to their managements. The success of the costume play averaged higher than that of the realistic.

The decay of the structure brought to its highest in the plays of Ibsen, and the increase in popular and sound drama of a picturesque nature, do not necessarily mean the end of realism, or progress for the drama. The shallowness of realism is still possible, though perhaps more difficult, in plays of many scenes; the shallowness of romance may be the first and the only result of voyages away from the life we know. But, taken with the record of twenty years of effort on the part of the artists and directors who have been learning and practicing the new art of imaginative production, all this change in the surface habits of the playwrights seems significant. The mysterious impulse which moved the more sensitive factors in the theatre toward a new kind of effort is playing more and more imperiously upon the dramatist. The sun of realism sinks.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FORM OF THE FUTURE.

TODAY the dramatic form degenerates, falls to pieces, lies neglected. Playwrights do not bother to learn the technique of Ibsen; if they know it by some divine instinct, or unconsciously absorb it by reading and observation, they do not bother to practice it. Like the modern painters, they refuse to load themselves down with a respectable, academic and rather laborious method. Like some of the modernists, they may be doing this because they are too lazy to master the technique of representation, or, like the genuine artists among the new painters, they may believe they are quick with a new life which demands the right to make its own form of expression; they may feel that spontaneity of inspiration cannot resist the deadening and tedious routine of the older technique.

Certainly the great mass of our playwrights who no longer build solid dramatic structures ignore construction because they get no pleasure from it and find the public does not demand it. Some take advantage of this freedom from form to give us small visions of humanity, bits of satiric humor, glimpses

into deep waters, that would be difficult, perhaps impossible to compass in the old technique. Almost all seem happy to go ahead making money, fame, and sometimes art on the easy and anarchic terms of a period of transition when one technique has died and another has not definitely been born.

When the new drama comes, what will be its technique, what form will it take? In the broader sense, of course, its technique will be the technique that has always ruled the theatre, the technique of effective human expression through dialogue. This implies, I have always felt, two vital things: dialogue of which almost every statement is alive with interest either in itself or the situation it helps to develop, and a general contour which masses the greater bulk of its emotional interest well along towards the close of the play. Beyond these simple considerations what will distinguish the form of the future drama?

It will be free in form, I think. So free, indeed, that many will find it far more anarchic than the disintegrating form of today. There will be no form at all in the strict sense of the Ibsen formula for the three- or four-act play. No age has applied strict exterior form without deadening the play. With the Greeks, there were conventions—the messenger, the *ition* or causating and commemorating event, the *deus ex machina,* the chorus—but these were all parts of the religious ritual from which drama sprang. When the so-

called Greek unities were forced upon drama, as they were with Racine and Corneille, they hindered and, I think, killed it. The Shakespearean form had its stock devices like the subplot, and its general character remains true to the conditions of the theatre from which it grew, but compared with the intricate arrangements of the well-built three-act play it seems almost formless. At the most it runs freely along with the mind of the audience.

One element of form in the play of tomorrow will seem fairly definite and fixed by contrast with the realistic form of the past. This will be a marked increase in the number of scenes. The noticeable tendency in our popular drama to escape from the restrictions of placing its scenes in only three or four places should grow. It is a healthful, natural thing. It frees the playwright for greater expression and it races forward with the imagination of the audience.

I had never felt the hampering and artificial quality of our three- and four-act convention until I happened to be connected with the production of the Russian drama, *Nju,* by Ossip Dymow. It seemed to me at first an odd and perhaps freakish thing, this story of a young wife's unhappiness and death told in a dozen short scenes. But, as I watched it in rehearsal, the significance of what this form permitted the author to accomplish became clearer and clearer to me—and also the restrictions of the older form.

Squeezing the dramatic elements of a human story into three or four places and periods of time has its positive value, of course. It may create a sense of fulness and vigor, of long-breathed excitement, as the action develops, piles up, and crashes down in one continuous scene of forty-five minutes or even an hour in length. When the scene remains the same throughout all the acts, or still more when the story is practically continuous in time throughout the whole play, this effect of a tremendous single action is very fine. There are plots to which such treatment is essential.

But such an effect in a single act or a whole play can be natural and inevitable only when the story told is fitted to this form of expression. Few stories are thus fitted. Most of them must be distorted to fit the form. The action must be condensed from its natural shape. It must be telescoped and dovetailed until it fits the three or four divisions of time employed. The logical actions of some of the people of the play must be changed or hastened in order to bring them within the limits of time and place that this form prescribes. Sometimes the characters of the people must be altered; sometimes those through which the story could be best told must be ignored for people who happen to fit the scenes selected, or unessential characters must be added and essential ones eliminated. If you are critical of what you see in the playhouse, you must be conscious of the manœuvring of plot and character

merely to get them into the room before you. Your mind's eye sees the playwright, in false beard, lurking in passages and alleys to serve the subpœna of the drama on some diffident witness to the truth of life.

The virtues of the play of sixteen or even fourteen scenes are obvious by contrast. Here—as in *Nju,* and Tolstoy's *Redemption,* with their thirteen scenes—the playwright is enabled to select out of the life of the story and the people of his imagination, just those incidents which will illuminate his conception. He seizes the significant moments. He does not have to distort his original conception. He gives us simply and directly, with as little compromise as possible, the original vision of his creative mind.

It is useless to deny that within this form the playwrights of the future will not be able to achieve those taut and suspensive scenes of elaborately developing interplay of characters and emotions which Ibsen could achieve in his long scenes. But, on the other hand, he will not be obligated to strive dishonestly for such effects when his narrative does not demand them; and when it does there is surely nothing to prevent his discarding the freedom of the new form for the special opportunities of the old. Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* so that we now divide it in twenty scenes, *Macbeth* is printed in twenty-nine; yet when the emotion of his story demanded a scene of thirty minutes length, as in *Othello* or *Hamlet,* he was under no ne-

cessity of splitting and twisting it into a different shape than it naturally took. As for those who believe that the play of short scenes suffers for lack of necessary preparation for emotion, and sacrifices fullness of character development, here again the answer is Shakespeare.

In the increase in the number of scenes the influence of the motion picture on the dramatic form is to be seen, quite as much as in the introducing of tricks like flashbacks, as in *On Trial* and other plays. The motion picture, freed of the restrictions, both physical and theoretical, which have been imposed on the realistic stage, is following the natural impulse of the human mind when it speeds from scene to scene. It is dramatizing thought. The motion picture has done a great deal to make us understand the distinctly similar form which Shakespeare used in the composition of his plays. After years of seeing Shakespeare's scenes cut up, rearranged, condensed and telescoped in an effort to fit them into the form of the current play, we got a sudden sense of the theatrical rightness of his own method when we studied the screen. The screen is a much brisker medium than the stage; the eye receives more quickly than the ear. For that reason the film scenario employs far more scenes than are possible in a play. Yet the principle of the rapidly succeeding scenes and episodes of a photoplay and of a Shakespearean drama is the same. Both are follow-

ing a narrative naturally and as the mind moves. Vision moves faster than hearing, that is all.

In its use of many scenes, arranged in whatever order seems either natural or dramatically appropriate, the drama of the future will be no more imitating the movies, nor hypnotized by them, than was Shakespeare. Yet unquestionably the motion picture has done and will do a great deal to hasten our return to freer and more direct dramatic methods. It will also carry us on to other changes in technique which would have come slowly, if at all, without the influence of the screen and the stimulus that it has given certain of our æsthetic processes. The screen has developed our quickness of perception; the result will be quicker dramatic movement on the stage and less necessity for emphasis and re-emphasis. The screen has come closer than the stage to our unconscious mind, because it has operated through sight, a sense that perceives directly and not, like the ear, through words alone. It has, therefore, often avoided a great deal of the false rationalizing of the conscious mind. I believe that in our future drama this logic of the eye will tend to encroach upon the logic of the mind, as the new stagecraft makes the qualities and the atmosphere of scenes more visually evident. As on the screen, there will be room for silence; silence sometimes explains more than speech. Dialogue will grow more condensed. It will seek less to imitate the rambling uncertainties

of natural speech. It will go to the point sharply and briefly. Something of the directness of the motion picture subtitle or printed caption will invade the stage. Playwrights will come closer to the condensation of the advertising writer. And the soliloquy will return again as a natural and proper revelation of the mind of a character. Even the aside may redevelop as a deliberate piece of theatricalism. It will not be the slovenly device of a playwright for telling us something that he is too lazy or inexpert to impart in any other way, but a frank and open intercourse between the actor and his audience, a reaffirmation that this is a play which is being acted, a remarkable game between these two.

I am not one of those who look for a theatre of pure action. But I do feel that other factors than dialogue will play an increasing part in the future drama. The screen has necessarily relegated the word to too insignificant a place, yet it has brought to our consciousness the possibilities of other mediums as means for reinforcing dramatic expression. In particular, its theatres have shown what music can do in strengthening our sense of mood and movement. The new art of the theatre is unquestionably to be a closer linking of many other arts. The dramatist of the future will think more in terms of color, design, movement, music, and less in words alone.

When he does think in terms of words alone, how

will he think? Will he still think in prose? Largely, I believe. He will certainly not think for whole hours in blank verse. The fact that Shakespeare managed to do this, that he was able to give variety to the monotonous te-tum te-tum te-tum te-tum te-tum of this verse form, is perhaps the greatest tribute to his technical power. There may be verse in the future drama, plenty of it; but it will not be limited to a single measure. It will fit the emotion of the scene, and change as the emotion changes. Sometimes it will be heavy with fate, then bright and light with happy romance, or it will sweep up magnificently with a soaring lift. The measure will suit the moment as completely as the time and the rhythm of the composer fit the various scenes of his opera. Hints of this, but no more, have appeared in two plays by Percy MacKaye, *A Thousand Years Ago* and *Sappho and Phaon.* Zoë Akins tried free verse in *The Magical City;* Robert Emmons Rogers made the most successful attempt at a fluid and varied handling of dramatic poetry in *Behind a Watteau Picture.* There is variety of meter in Sidney Howard's *Swords.* Only perhaps in Alfred Kreymborg's eccentric and delightful little plays such as *Lima Beans* is there any attempt on the part of an English-speaking playwright to explore the rich field of brisk and sprightly meters which give a director unusual opportunities as well as require unusual skill on his part. Otherwise little has been written and less acted

in America or England that is not conventional blank verse; it is one of the eternal puzzles of the theatre—that playwrights attempting verse have clung so desperately to a single meter throughout and to only one of the many possible meters. The fact that it is the nearest to English prose perhaps accounts for it.

For English prose can be a wonderful and a beautiful thing. So beautiful, in fact, and so strong, that I am personally of the belief not only that prose will be the dominant form of expression in the future, but that it will meet almost every requirement of emotional expression upon the stage for which verse would be essential in the printed book. Rhythmed prose, of course, but simple concrete prose, the English of the King James version of the Bible. In the last decade or two, such English has been written for the stage and written superbly, by Synge, by Masefield in *Nan* and *Pompey,* by Drinkwater, by Cannan in *Miles Dixon,* by Dunsany, and by O'Neill in *The Emperor Jones.*

Though Dunsany is so often hopelessly artificial, precious, and literary, he is just as often the master of the simple and direct speech which is clear with the images of life. One example from *The Golden Doom* should suffice. The guards are standing in the beating sun outside the gates of Babylon. They are very hot. One says: "I would I were swimming down the Gishon on the cool side under the fruit trees." The word "would" I object to; it is literary archaism. But the

rest is, within its simple limits, perfect. There is no folderol about it; no talk of being "laved by translucent waters, where the pomegranate spreadeth its blossoms." Every word is the simple, natural word; every word calls up a picture and the right picture; the rhythm is clear and flowing like the water.

Synge does the same thing even more admirably. His plays are full of such writing. Recall just one example from *In the Shadow of the Glen:*

"We'll be going now, I'm telling you, and the time you'll be feeling the cold, and the frost, and the great rain, and the sun again, and the south wind blowing in the glens, you'll not be sitting up on a wet ditch, the way you're after sitting in this place, making yourself old with looking on each day, and it passing you by."

Masefield, a poet who turns all too rarely to the theatre, senses, when he does turn to it, the essential simplicity and yet the essential vividness of the spoken word. I might quote the whole closing scene of his *Tragedy of Nan* as a splendid example of this. Instead, consider this from *Pompey:*

"The greatest man in the world! And all through being with Sulla in the Civil War. Supposing he were not great, Philip. Only a big clay statue. A statue propped up by sticks. A clay thing, gilded. Rats gnawing at it. The wind shaking it. The sun cracking it. (*Pause.*) And dead men, Philip. Dead

men underneath it in the dust, fumbling at it to bring it down."

Wherever the dramatist of tomorrow may find his form—and it may be farther from the movies than I think—it will be a form that has room in it not alone for action, music, dance, color, line and movement, but also for the magnificent prose that you find in the speech of the greatest and the simplest of our people.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CONTENT OF THE FUTURE.

IT is easy to discover in the degeneration of the dramatic form today indications of the shape that the play of tomorrow will take—a loose, free shape with many scenes, less talk and more vitality in its production. It is not so easy to grasp its content. Yet even there we have indications already of broad trends which it seems difficult for the future drama to escape.

Perhaps the simplest and surest statement that I should risk is this: It will attempt to transfer to dramatic art the illumination of those deep and vigorous and eternal processes of the human soul which the psychology of Freud and Jung has given us through study of the unconscious, striking to the heart of emotion and linking our commonest life today with the emanations of the primitive racial mind.

The attempts to get back of realism to reality—which is in art nothing but the exploration of the unconscious mind below the appearance and pretense of man—have been few as yet, halting, obvious or extravagant, but at least suggestive.

In their crudest and most literal form they appear

in attempts to present upon the stage the thoughts or the unconscious motives of characters. In Alice Gerstenberg's *Overtones,* for example, while two women go through the formalities of social intercourse their deeper selves, standing veiled behind them, betray to the audience their true attitudes, emotions and desires. Sometimes the whole dialogue of these playlets—for they have never dared go beyond the one-act form—is merely the unspoken thoughts of the people made audible by the free convention of the aside. Thus in *They* by Hervé Lauwick, a man and a woman sitting opposite each other in a railroad carriage speculate upon one another's charms and matrimonial estate, and H. L. Mencken in his amusing skit, *The Artist,* reveals the secret thoughts of the famous pianist and his audience during a recital. Such games are entertaining novelties hardly more than indicating a public curiosity. They do not touch the soul-searing inner revelation of such a *bizarrerie* as Strindberg's *Spook Sonata.*

On the other hand three schools of playwrights have arisen that nourish more or less complete philosophies of a new drama, and attempt with greatly varying success to project these theories into dramatic action. The first of these schools is known to those outside its home only by the works of its founder, Yevreynoff, though there must, of course, be followers for so brilliant and provocative a theorist and creator. Yev-

reynoff's theory of "mono-drama"—that the whole play, its action, its setting and all its people, should be seen by the audience through the eyes of one character only, as the hero sees them, and should take on the quality, color, movement and motives which his mind conceives them to possess—may end in nothing more than an entertaining or a rather incomprehensible "stunt." It cannot well escape unless it penetrates not merely what the hero thinks he thinks, but his unconscious mind as well, and represents not what he thinks but what he desires. Yevreynoff's best known piece, *The Theatre of the Soul,* is a playlet suggestive of *Overtones,* but it goes much deeper into dual mental states. From the name of a playhouse now functioning in Moscow, the Dramatic Mono-Theatre, it may be guessed that Yevreynoff's theory has gone far towards practical exploitation since he formulated it more than ten years ago.

The second school of what might be called advanced dramaturgy issued its manifesto, *The Futurist Synthetic Theatre,* in 1915, over the signatures of F. T. Marinetti, Emilion Settimelli and Bruno Corra. From its theories and its plays, as interpreted and translated by Isaac Goldberg, the futurist movement in the theatre seems characteristically violent and freakish. Yet there lies hidden in it evidence of a not unhealthful rebellion against surface-realism. It is "anti-technical"; it despises the elaborate and tedious mechanism

of exposition, preparation, motivation, climax. It is opposed to logical action: "For example, it is stupid to represent upon the stage a struggle between two persons, always carried on with order, logic and clarity; while in our experience we find almost exclusively fragments of disputes which our activity as modern men has permitted us to witness for but a moment in the street car, in a cafe, at a station, and which have remained filmed (*cinematografati*) upon our minds as dynamic, fragmentary symphonies of gestures, words, sounds and light."

Goldberg thus sums up the theory of the futurists in an article in *The Boston Transcript:* "These, then, are the conclusions arrived at by the signers of the manifesto: First, the total abolition of the technique under the burden of which the 'passatist' theatre is dying out. Second, to place upon the 'boards' all the discoveries being made in the realms of the subconscious, in ill-defined forces, in pure abstraction, in pure cerebralism, pure fantasy. Third, the invasion of the auditorium and the spectators by the scenic action. Fourth, to fraternize warmly with the actors, who are among the only thinkers who flee every deforming cultural effort. Fifth, to abolish farce, vaudeville, pochade, drama, tragedy, and create such new forms as the 'battute in liberta' (free blows), 'simultanetta' (simultaneity), 'compenetration,' the 'animated poem,' the

'sceniefied sensation,' the 'dialogued hilarity,' the 'negative act' and so onward."

The curious plays which Marinetti has written and published explain some of these mysterious forms. Most of the pieces are very short, some hardly two or three pages long. Through most of them Marinetti betrays a modern and thoroughly unliterary sense of the part that light and setting can play in action. One piece shows only the feet of the performers, while the rest of their bodies are hidden by a black curtain that reaches almost to the floor. Another sets hands moving in a series of symbolic gestures above another black curtain. In others the furniture speaks and the lights are expected to give them a semblance of movement.

The most characteristic feature of Marinetti's method is what he calls "simultaneity" and "compenetration" and from which the "synthesis" of the Futurist Synthetic Theatre is derived. It is the presentation of two or three places simultaneously on the stage and the juxtaposition of people and actions whose only relationship is perhaps spiritual. So far as the physical arrangement of this is concerned, Marinetti merely harks back to the platform stage of the French mystery plays, where Heaven occupied one end of the stage, Hell the other, and between them appeared half a dozen other places, just as in his enthusiasm for improvisational and spontaneous acting he touches the *commedia dell' arte*. While there is no simultaneity of

setting in his playlet, *On a Moonlit Night,* the presence of an unseen and symbolic gentleman during a love scene carries the quality of "compenetration." To show the nature of futurist drama I quote this "anti-logical compenetration" from Goldberg's translation:

Scene: A Garden. A Bench.

He—What a beautiful night! Let us sit down here. . . .

She—How fragrant the air is!

He—We are all alone, we two, in this vast garden. . . . Aren't you afraid?

She—No. . . . No. . . . I am so happy to be here alone with you.

A Stout, Heavy-paunched Gentleman (Enters from a side-path, approaches the couple, sits down upon the bench beside them. They do not see him however, as if he were an invisible personage)—Hum. Hum. (He stares at the maiden while she speaks.)

She—Did you feel that breeze?

The Stout, Heavy-paunched Gentleman—Hum. Hum. (He stares at the young maiden while he speaks.)

He—It isn't the breeze.

She—But isn't there really anybody in this garden?

He—Only the watchman, yonder, in his cottage. He's asleep. Come here closer. . . . Give me your lips. . . . So.

The Stout, Heavy-paunched Gentleman — Hum. Hum. (Looks at his watch by the light of the moon, rises, walks about pensively in front of the two as they kiss, and then sits down again).

She—What a beautiful night!

He—How fragrant the air is!

The Stout, Heavy-paunched Gentleman—Hum. Hum.

He—Why are you trembling? Did something frighten you?

She—No. Kiss me again.

The Stout, Heavy-paunched Gentleman (Looks again at his watch by the light of the moon, rises, walks behind the bench, unseen, and lightly touches first her shoulder, then his, and disappears slowly into the background).

She—What a shudder!

He—It's getting somewhat cold. . . .

She—Late, too.

He—Let's go in. What do you say?

The remaining school stems from the "expressionist" movement in German art. Like expressionism itself, which includes almost any variety of revolt from representative art, this dramatic movement is much more inclusive, and much sounder in theory than Marinetti's. Moreover it has produced long plays of arresting merit.

Since expressionism itself is an attempt to escape from representing nature in the terms of its effect on the artist, and instead to present the emotion of the artist in terms of either nature or abstract form, its drama is at utter odds with realism. It must use nature or man as the medium of expression but it subdues the appearance of the natural world to the inner reality of the emotion which it wishes to make clear to us. The parallelism between painting and drama is

not exact—except perhaps in the scrapping of slow and tedious old methods of technique which hamper the clear and spontaneous flow of creation—but the result is distinctive and often sound. In its extremist form, as fostered by the "Sturm" group, it runs off into the absurdity of Mallarmé and his *L'Après-midi d'un faune,* the dependence on sound rather than sense of words. Dr. Goldberg, who has done so much to make America acquainted with the byways of European and South American literature, thus translates the avowed purpose of this faction to attempt "the pure, immediate effect of the word, freed from all rational, logical or grammatical bonds."

The "Aktion" group and unattached expressionists follow a saner path. They begin with the prime sanity of abjuring realism. Edsmid, one of the theorists, has admirably expressed in a single epigram the whole quarrel with literal representation: "The world is here; it would be absurd to repeat it." Goldberg thus sums up the philosophy of the movement as it is expressed by Manfred Schneider in *Der Expressionismus in Drama:* "It designs for the stage a musicality of word, a broad sweep, a vast simplicity, a preference for types rather than well-characterized individuality, the whole to be infused with, or suffused in, an atmosphere of exaltation. The expressionists favor intuition rather than artifice, even in the acting. They would fill their pieces with ideas, yet shun the 'thesis

play.' They would produce the impression of deep feeling, yet without what we are accustomed to term psychology in drama. Most of all they would abandon the ivory tower and seek social, universal significance." The expressionists are never seduced by romanticism as an escape from this world and from realism. The expressionists, like the futurists, deny the contributions of modern psychological study of character. They believe it ends in an absorption with minutiæ. It carries us away from "The free man delivered by the essential and by the spiritual."

Among the men who have written thus are Kurt Sternheim, Paul Kornfeld, Walter Hasenclever, Franz Werfel, Friederich Wolf, Fritz von Unruh, the painter Kokoschka and—the most effective and the most popular—Georg Kaiser. Their work has ranged from a new *Antigone* to tales as strange as Poe's. Let us examine one of Kaiser's dramas which has been produced by Reinhardt in Berlin, presented experimentally in London by the Stage Society, and filmed in Germany.

From Morn to Midnight tells in seven scenes the adventures of a man who begins the morning as a bank clerk, steals a fortune because his senses are swept for a moment by a woman whom he imagines to be an adventuress, lives out a number of modern methods of dissipation when he finds she wants nothing to do with him, and ends a suicide in a Salvation Army

Hall. It is amazingly staccato. Even the soliloquies with which it is liberally supplied are crisp and sharp. It is shot with terror and with humor. Both cut close to those strange psychic realities of life which come often with the effect of a hypnotic interlude in logical normal existence.

When the clerk is crossing a field of snow in his flight with the money he takes off his wet, soiled cuffs and throws them aside saying: "Soiled. There they lie. Missing in the wash. The mourners will cry through the kitchen: A pair of cuffs is lost. A catastrophe in the boiler. A world in chaos." Suddenly the wind shakes the branches of a tree, and the snowflakes, descending lower, cling in the form of a skeleton. The man pays no heed except to jeer. He rejoices, rather desperately perhaps, that circumstances have made him over from a trusted employee into a criminal who is to taste life at last. "I'll open my breast to Fate; all comers are welcome." He stops at his home for a last look. He leaves without eating his luncheon. Routine upset. His mother "beats the air suddenly with her arms; and falls senseless." "She dies," he reflects, "because a man goes out of the house before a meal." And, a criminal and a free man, he is to go so far.

He goes first to a great bicycle race to buy excitement. Here occurs one of the remarkable and char-

acteristic scenes of the play. He offers fabulous prizes to the racers, and then watches—the crowd.

First Gentleman—But you must keep your eye on the track, and watch the varying course of the struggle——

Cashier—Childish, this sport. One rider must win because the other loses. . . . Look up, I say. It's there, among the crowd, that the magic works. The wine ferments in this vast barrel of spectators. The frothing is least at the bottom, among the well-bred public in the stalls. There you see nothing but looks . . . but what looks! Round stares. Eyes of cattle. . . . One row higher the bodies sway and vibrate, the limbs begin to dance. A few cries are heard. Your respectable middle class. . . . Higher still all veils are dropped. A wild fanatic shout, a bellowing nakedness, a gallery of passions. . . . Just look at that group. Five times entwined, five heads dancing on one shoulder, five pairs of arms beating time across one howling breast. At the heart of this monster is a single man. He's being crushed . . . mangled . . . thrust over the parapet. His hat, crumpled, falls through the rising smoke . . . flutters into the middle balcony, lights upon a lady's bosom. She pays no heed. There it rests daintily . . . so daintily. She'll never notice the hat; she'll go to bed with it; year in year out, she'll carry this hat upon her breast. (*The applause swells.*)

First Gentleman—The Dutchman is putting on a spurt.

Cashier—The middle row joins in the shout. An alliance has been made; the hat has done the trick. The lady crushes it against the rails. Pretty lady, your bosom will show the marks of this. There's no help for it. Madness to struggle. The throng presses you against the rails, and you must yield. You must grant all. . . .

Second Gentleman—Do you know the lady?

Cashier—See now, the five up there have thrust their one over the balustrade. He swings free, he loosens his hold, he drops—he sails down into the stalls. What has become of him? Vanished. Swallowed, stifled, absorbed. A raindrop in a maelstrom.

First Gentleman—The Hamburger is making up ground.

Cashier—The stalls are frantic. The falling man has set up contact. Restraint can go to the devil. Dinner-jackets quiver. Shirt fronts begin to split. Studs fly in all directions. Lips are parted, jaws are rattling. Above and below—all distinctions are lost. One universal yell from every tier. Pandemonium. Climax.

He offers a still larger prize. The crowd is ecstatic. Suddenly a hush. Majesty has entered its box. The cashier takes back his offer, withdraws his "subscription to the society of hunchbacks." "This glow-

ing fire extinguished, . . . trodden out by the patent-leather boot of His Highness. You take me for crazy if you think I will throw one single penny under the snouts of these grovelling dogs, these crooked lackeys."

Off goes the cashier to sample the disillusionments of a private room in a cabaret. The end is a scene in a Salvation Army hall, with all the fervid concomitants of confessions and penitents. The sin of humdrum domesticity, as much as the sins of crime, of pride, of self-display, is confessed. At last the cashier is swamped by the emotion of it. He rushes to the platform, and, beside a Salvation Army lass, confesses his crime. Also the futility of all that he had won until now as a result of it. "What is the goal," he cries, "what is the prize that's worth the whole stake? This hall, humming with crowded benches, ringing with melody. This hall. Here, from stool to stool, the spirit thunders fulfilment. Here glow the twin crucibles: confession and repentance. Molten and free from dross, the soul stands like a glittering tower, strong and bright." He cries that money can buy nothing worth while. He throws it to the crowded hall to be torn and trampled under foot. Instead, of course, there is a wild scramble for the notes, and the hall empties its fighting load. Another disillusion. But still there is the Salvation Army girl beside him. He grasps this comradeship as the last good. Wildly drumming, he shouts: "Maiden and man . . . eternal

constancy. Maiden and man . . . fullness in the void . . . the seed and the flower. Maiden and man . . . a sense and aim and goal." While he chants, the girl slips out—to bring a policeman and earn the reward for his capture. The policeman turns out the lights. The electric wires glitter in the shape of the skeleton again. The man has run raging in a circle to reach the end. He shoots himself and as the lights go up he falls back against the big cross on the platform. "His husky gasp is like an 'ecce,' his heavy sigh is like a 'homo'! One second later all the lights explode with a loud report."

From Morn to Midnight is a bizarre piece that breaks far too many dramaturgic idols for popularity here and now, yet it is unquestionably filled with a very intense sense of the deep emotional background against which life passes. Kaiser has succeeded in getting past the surface of reality. He has penetrated the basic stratum of man's psyche. To do this, I take it, is the purpose of expressionism. It is certainly the task of the drama of tomorrow, if it is going to replace realism with something truer than romance. The problem of the future playwright is to escape from realism without turning his back on the world.

He must see with Storm Jameson, as she has expressed it in her *Modern Drama in Europe* that "The stage of today is crowded by characters whose names we forget, whose features fade away in the indeter-

minate mass of their herd, and whose deeds, if they accomplish anything, matter not at all for the action of the play or for the revelation of personality." And, questioning realism, the future playwright may well ask with Miss Jameson: "Whence has arisen this conception of drama as the unfolding of small questions of sex, with little of inspiration and with less of beauty, this purposeless effort which seems to be both symptom and warning?" But he must be careful lest—aided not a little by the pictorial possibilities of the modern stage—he ends merely in a neo-romanticism.

The danger is evident, for the first move away from realism in America has been towards the picturesque, the costume play, the drama of alien borders. That is not enough. That is mere narcoticism. Unless as I think, this desire for the exotic is simply a means to bringing imagination into our time and our own place. The romantic play, with modern psychological understanding of character added, will be a better thing than the romantic play of a hundred years ago. It will give us back a hero or two worth worrying over, but surely no sense of the imminences of our own life.

I believe the return of the picturesque play may be hopeful for many reasons. It is to begin with, an evidence of the attempt of imagination to gain a foothold in the drama to match the position it has assumed in stagecraft and production. More important, however, this seems to me the first step in bringing fresh spiritual

qualities into the plays that treat of our own humdrum life. We will accept an imaginative treatment of human beings in an unaccustomed *locale* while we would ban it if the place were Main Street or Harlem. First we must hear of Fate in Krongros. Later we will listen with an open mind if a playwright talks about something besides dollars in Wall Street. Perhaps the German expressionists like Georg Kaiser have been able to write so soon of bank clerks because Germany has long known Shakespeare, von Hofmannsthahl, Maeterlinck, Schiller, Goethe, Hebbel.

As imaginative and spiritual values enter the drama of our life, "psychology" will partially go out. One need not go as far as Marinetti and the Italian futurists, or even as far as the German expressionists in decrying minute absorption in the conscious mind of characters; and yet one must recognize that the larger issues of the spirit, and the larger sense of life rise above accurate representation of average people. They strive to present some corner of the soul of things as it grasps human beings. Storm Jameson says in her vigorous attack on the pettiness of our dramatic figures: "Tragedy is a matter of great souls." The new playwright will recognize something a little deeper when he sees that drama is a matter of souls caught in great spiritual issues and reflecting them. The grandeur of the play of the future must lie not in a superhuman figure, but in the vast and eternal forces of

life which we are made to recognize as they play upon him. The expressionist puts it rather rhetorically when he writes: "Let the characters be great in the sense that their existence, their lives, share the great existence of the heavens and the earth—that their hearts, united to all that occurs, beat in time with the universe." Yet essentially that is the path of imagination. The drama must seek to make us recognize the thing that, since Greek days, we had forgotten—the eternal identity of you and me with the vast and unmanageable forces which have played through every atom of life since the beginning. Psychoanalysis, tracing back our thoughts and actions into fundamental impulses, has done more than any one factor to make us recover the sense of our unity with the dumb, mysterious processes of nature. We know now through science what the Greeks and all primitive peoples knew through instinct. The task is to apply it to art and, in our case, to the drama.

It may be applied generally; it may give us a drama utterly apart from anything we have now, nearer perhaps to the Greek than to any other in spirit, yet wholly new in mechanism and method, mysteriously beautiful and visionary. The new sense of the significance of life, which we have won both through science and in spite of science, may take a dramatic form which springs straight from the life about us and requires no more trappings of mysterious beauty than

does Kaiser's *From Morn to Midnight.* But whatever the form of the play, the content will have a spiritual quality that gives us this subliminal sense of mysterious age-old processes alive in us today. For this quality there is now no good word. "Mystic" savors of obscurantism; "religious" implies a god to be worshiped; "psychic" smacks of Sir Oliver Lodge. The spiritual values of which I write are the spiritual values that invade, willynilly, the work of even such a propagandist-philosopher as Shaw when creative evolution seizes him and turns him revelator, as in the vision of the mayoress in *Getting Married,* which begins:

"When you loved me I gave you the whole sun and stars to play with. I gave you eternity in a single moment, strength of the mountains in one clasp of your arms, and the volume of all the seas in one impulse of our souls. A moment only, but was it not enough? Were you not paid then for all the rest of your struggle on earth? Must I mend your clothes and sweep your floors as well? Was it not enough? I paid the price without bargaining: I bore the children without flinching: was that a reason for heaping fresh burdens upon me? I carried the child in my arms: must I carry the father, too? When I opened the gates of paradise were you blind? was it nothing to you? When all the stars sang in your ears and all the winds swept you into the heart of heaven, were you deaf? were you

dull? was I no more to you than a bone to a dog? Was it not enough? We spent eternity together; and you ask me for a little lifetime more. We possessed all the universe together and you ask me to give you my scanty wages as well. I have given you the greatest of all things and you ask me to give you the little things. I gave you your own soul: you ask me for my body as a plaything. Was it not enough? Was it not enough?"

CHAPTER XVIII.

A DRAMA OF INTIMACY AND OF CROWDS.

I AM aware that these are rather rash speculations. They play with the unaccountable fire of creation. At best they are projections from a few facts, examples and tendencies. As with all projections a slight difference in the estimate of the facts at the base may end in a wide divergence of line. And their path is strewn with real or apparent conflicts. It is the purpose of this chapter to examine two of the most glaring conflicts that must be evident in all that I have thus far written. They are conflicts that must become still more evident as we turn from the province of the playwright as an interpreter of the *Zeitgeist* of the new theatre and try to see how his work will be affected by the great divergence between the types of new playhouses which are today beginning to take shape.

Forgetting for the moment the realistic dramas which will continue to be written, we find the playwright facing two types of dramatic expression and two theatres in which these types may take their places. There may be the drama of reality lifted to a plane

of sharp, clear, absolute expression, calling upon the imagination both in creation and appreciation, and there may be the drama of imagination based upon the reality of spiritual truth but lifted to levels of sheer beauty which the interpretation of life today does not permit. For theatres, the playwright will find the intimate playhouse of the Vieux Colombier and all the forms that may lie between it and our own present day theatre, and he will find the gigantic auditoriums and orchestras of such houses as the Grosses Schauspielhaus in Berlin. The playwright will thus face the conflict of Kaiser *vs.* Dunsany and the conflict of Copeau *vs.* Reinhardt. It is a cross-conflict as well, for the plays of Dunsany and Kaiser may be as intimate as *The Golden Doom* and *From Morn to Midnight* and as suited to Copeau's playhouse, while Kaiser has written *Europa* for the Grosses Schauspielhaus, and *The Gods of the Mountain* would not be impossible there.

The fact of the matter is that the course of the new art of the theatre is curiously split upon the rock of the little theatre and the circus—only to reunite, I think, later on. It is hard at first to see any relation between the intimacy of Max Reinhardt's Kammerspielhaus, seating three or four hundred, and the spectacular vigor of his Grosses Schauspielhaus with its three thousand. Realism finds nowhere such perfect expression as in a playhouse where everyone is seated

close in front of its picture frame, while it is fundamentally impossible in such a playhouse as the Grosses with its forestages and its orchestra floor leading players and playgoers away from the stage above. Yet the affinity of the little theatre for realism is only relative. Realism requires good sight lines, good acoustics and particularly an audience placed directly in the focus of the picture drama; but, with all this, realism demands a reticent sort of intimacy. To make the playgoer and player feel themselves too close would ruin the illusion of a separate, complete and actual world existing on the stage. The directors of the newer theatre first utilized little theatres, not to gain the illusion of realism, but because such houses were economically adapted to the risky experiments they were making; their rentals fitted the smaller audiences that these men expected to be able to attract. After they had begun to use them, they found that these small auditoriums also enabled them to bring their actors into close touch with the audience—a relationship that they soon discovered was essential to the work of escaping from realism and representation. They were next trying to increase even this very close intimacy by bringing the actors down upon forestages and runways and even into the aisles. The intimacy that they created in the little theatres was the intimacy almost of physical contact.

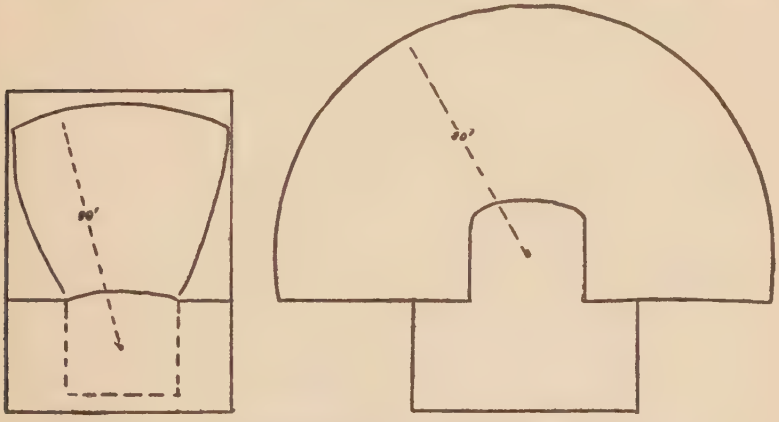
The step from such intimacy to the huge spaces of

the circus is not so great as it may seem. For in these circus productions you will never find the audience placed at one side of the building and the actors upon a stage clear across at the other. In every case, whether it is Reinhardt in Berlin, Gémier in Paris, or MacKaye in New York, you will find the actor thrust out into the midst of the spectators. He deserts the stage for the orchestra, as the Greeks did. The audience virtually surrounds him.

Not content with that, he invades the seats of the spectators themselves, and in the trial scene in *Danton* he springs up beside the playgoer and hurls invective at the court until the audience and the mob in the orchestra are wellnigh fused into one. If we consider the matter more on a mathematical basis of distance a comparison of the intimacy of a small theatre with its deep picture-frame stage and of a large theatre with its apron or orchestra for stage, shows this interesting result: Keep the farthest spectators just as close to the actor on the centre of the apron as he would be to the actor on the centre of the ordinary stage and you still increase the seating capacity of your auditorium three times without giving up any intimacy as shown in the drawing on the page opposite.

Superficially the difference both in intimacy and in kind of emotion between a little theatre and a circus seems great. Actually, when an artist of the new theatre employs both houses, the intimacy is almost iden-

tical—the intimacy of the actor's actuality—while the emotional intensity of the huge audience is bound to compensate for the realistic effects which the small house alone makes possible and which at one point and another will always be necessary to achieve certain ends. The tendency of Fuchs, Littmann, and



THE BOX-SETTING VS. THE FORESTAGE

At the left is the normal modern theatre, with the actor in the centre of a box-like stage. If the stage were to be thrust forward, as in the Greek orchestra, the Elizabethan playhouse, or the Reinhardt circus, the capacity could be trebled while every spectator would remain as close to the actor as before.

Copeau, though they put their forestages into theatres seating no more than a thousand people, is still related to the purpose of Reinhardt in his circus-theatre. They are all striving for theatrical intimacy, even though one of them leaps beyond it to the violence of mob-emotion as well. The theatre of tomorrow may be both the theatre where the mob speaks in great gestures and the theatre where a few draw closer to a spirit.

In the little theatres, which began with the realistic Théâtre Libre and have not ended with Copeau's Vieux Colombier, two conflicts raged which have their importance for the far future. It was at first the conflict of the realistic and the æsthetic, the conflict of Brieux and Maeterlinck. Now it has become the conflict of the expressionistic and the æsthetic, the conflict of Kaiser and Dunsany. The first reaction against realism took the form of an attempt to escape from actuality into the mysteries and the shelter of never-never-land. And in all the record of the new art of the theatre—filled as it is with vigorous belief in the reality of life and the truth of the spirit—there has lurked a longing to escape entirely from the problems of the human soul into a sort of æsthetic Nirvana.

There is charm in this search for pure beauty, but in the air of small playhouses it is apt to be an oppressive charm. It lacks vigor. In the future I see the smaller theatre turning more to such work as Kaiser's *From Morn to Midnight,* to attempts to capture larger values among the things of our ordinary life; I see the æstheticism of Dunsany and the beauty and power of von Hofmannsthahl flung out into the orchestra of the circus-theatre. There it can never remain an arid thing. It must be caught up by the grandeur of space and of the multitude into larger and more eternal values. Only one thing beside beauty can invade the mob-theatre and live. That is the story of the mob itself.

We may look for Rolland and his *Danton* at the heart of the theatre of the five thousand. But beauty will always remain the fuel for the flame of this theatre of humanity.

The theatre of the circus opens up possibilities for the playwright that seem singularly broad and singularly pregnant with the spirit of the age. Such a theatre enables him to write in terms of movement as well as of words, to dramatize life upon varying levels of consciousness and of actuality, to reach ever closer to the life-giving vigor of vast audiences, to arouse in such mighty gatherings emotions which sweep in one gigantic swell to the players and are thrown back in still more majestic power to the audience again. In such a playhouse is born a sense of drama which transcends individual action. The "group-being" that Percy MacKaye and Robert Edmond Jones created in *The Will of Song* becomes an actuality. This conception has found brilliant expression in these words of Jones:

"The new poet of the theatre, looking ever deeper and deeper into his own heart, envisaging the outward world of images more and more remotely, may come eventually to a kind of bird's-eye view of life, the view of Thomas Hardy in *The Dynasts,* a view already made familiar to the public by the aeroplane and the motion picture. He may see in time, not only how people unconsciously reveal their inmost secret selves

to the world in every attitude and gesture and intonation, but how they unconsciously group and regroup themselves into crowds and communities under the guidance of an ever-shifting, invisible plan. He may come to understand at last, in an ecstasy of clear seeing, that the radiant heroic beings of which he has dreamed are not supermen, not men at all, not even Übermarionettes, but groups of men—group-beings—and that the hero of his drama is in truth the people. He will study the movements of crowds and the formation of crystals, and the shifting patterns in a kaleidoscope, and he will begin to understand also how ideas precipitate crystals of men around leaders of thought and emotion. He will perceive that these kaleidoscopic, crystalline group-beings—forever shaping and reshaping themselves under moving beams of light that shine brightly upon them for an instant and pass—live out an organic life of their own that dominates and transcends the daily life of men and women (who are indeed but the corpuscles that flow in their blood), not condescending to human outline or human speech but expressing themselves in a multiple unity of form and utterance which by a miracle he is permitted to comprehend, to praise, to summon and to command."

The conception of groups of actors as replacing individuals is obviously related to the impersonal chorus of Greek tragedy. It was a conception first formulated in Jones's scheme of some years ago for a pro-

THE SONG OF ROLAND

A design by Robert Edmond Jones for an episode in a community drama. A step towards abstraction: motionless figures in armor grouped to suggest the impenetrability of a mediæval fortress.

duction of Shelley's *Cenci* upon a platform, like a prize-ring in the midst of an audience, with the central figures of the drama still further centered within a moving and posing chorus which should act as symbolic setting for the action confined within its living walls. These are group-beings only half animate. They contribute to the drama but they have not yet become the drama itself.

In the mask and the marionette—the inanimate given life—there lies an almost equal fascination for the worker in the theatre of tomorrow. In the work of the playwright who writes for the circus-theatre there will doubtless be a place for these venerable and not unholy devices. Masks may play their part, and, in a more precious way, the marionettes. Both involve a certain strange and enthralling sense of the mystic quality of the theatre, of art commanding life and of life springing from art. They take a more natural place in these theatres where realistic illusion is of necessity banned. One can conceive of a drama of group-beings in which great individuals, around whom these groups coalesce, could be fitly presented only under the impersonal and eternal aspect of the mask; or, again, a drama in which the foil to the mob is the marionette who is thought to give it utterance. One can conceive as easily the mask and the marionette finding an inevitable use in intimate symbolic drama or in the expression of the unconscious.

Such conceptions carry us far across tomorrow. For they cannot become facts until such a theatre as the Grosses Schauspielhaus is built in New York, and such a theatre will not be built and should not be built until we have evidence that America has a director who can rise to its opportunities. Productions of this sort might, of course, take shape in open-air theatres as festival performances undertaken only on special occasions. But here enter disadvantages and delays. In spite of much enthusiasm spent on the open-air theatre I cannot see it as our future playhouse. By daylight the modern and often ugly hats and gowns and clothes of the audience are unbearably disillusioning. By night—except for the distracting beauties of the changing sky—I cannot see that the outdoor theatre achieves anything that cannot be better achieved indoors, with lighting under more exact control, and the physical conditions of stage and orchestra so much more flexible and effective. As for the festival—is it genuinely and sincerely possible until the day when some fundamental change in our conceptions of life brings back something approaching the religious devotion that surrounded Greek drama?

CHAPTER XIX.

THE THEATRE OF DEMOCRACY.

IN the main I have tried to write of the coming theatre and its drama as if society were to go on with much the same class divisions, class interests and class cultures as exist today. My conclusions have rested on the implied basis of our leisure-class theatre. This seems something less than sound, complete or safe. Revolution, economic and political, is either accomplished or imminent in much of Europe; and though it may be years before the bankruptcy of capitalism cuts across the imperial path of America, the upsetting of all our present æsthetic and moral values is something to be considered very seriously in any volume that tries to speak of the theatre of tomorrow. We cannot ignore the possibility that the whole aristocratic basis may be cut from under our present playhouse.

To the majority of American theatregoers this will sound rather extravagant. In the days when the Socialist party foreswears Moscow, while it inveighs against the blackest reaction that America has ever known, revolution seems more chimerical than ever; yet revolution is never so far away, some one has said,

as the day before it happens. As for the aristocratic basis of our theatre, you do not have to be familiar with the manners and mentality of our most successful theatrical managers to believe the superstition that the theatre is a democratic art.

As a matter of fact the theatre is not necessarily anything of the sort. Of course it is very far from an exclusive art. It cannot be made or enjoyed by individuals. It is coöperative in production and it requires an audience of some hundreds of thousands. In its greatest periods it has been utterly democratic, and it succeeds only when it is perfect enough to induce a common reaction among its spectators, to forge a common soul. Yet the groups with which the theatre must work may be relatively small groups, groups unrepresentative of the body of a nation. A play may be a successful play, artistically and financially, and yet reach only fifty thousand or a hundred thousand New Yorkers, while a thousand times this audience, scattered across the continent, know nothing of it. The most that the theatre does today is to reach the middle classes. Even if it reached all the people of our nation I doubt whether it would yet be a democratic art; for democracy is a thing of the spirit and, for us, still unborn. The democratic method in government is one thing, and a very deceptive thing; Democracy is something else, something of the future. When it comes it will make over the theatre, be sure of that.

And it will give it that deep spiritual sincerity, that religious content, in which great drama waxes.

Suppose we do have revolution. Suppose it is genuine spiritual revolution, proletarian and complete, not the abortive and constrained, though glorious, upheaval of the French Revolution. What will its theatre be? How far will this theatre of the day after tomorrow differ from that which I have tried to foresee and describe?

Essentially, I imagine, it will include many of the elements which I have outlined, and elaborate some still further—the group-being, for example. Of the technical qualities which I see already in evidence about us, most are to be found in the great democratic theatres of Greece, of the Middle Ages and of Elizabethan England. They go back of realism to a theatre that had no earthly conception of being representational, to a theatre where actors, costumes, and what there was of setting, were relatively real things in themselves, presenting emotion directly to their audiences, by either naïve or conventional devices, and never aiming to represent men and women and things as actually existing apart from the audience.

Somewhat similarly the spiritual elements of the new drama go back to the emotional roots of instinctive racial drama even while they build on to conscious study and interpretation of instinct and intuition and in general the whole vast field of the unconscious mind

of man. The content of the drama of tomorrow, cut off from realism, is clearly united with the content of primitive and democratic drama even while it goes ahead to a range of mental exploration that must be of gathering importance to a broadly democratic culture.

Yet before we say that this theatre of tomorrow will also be the theatre of democracy we must face the fact that the largest part of the work toward this theatre during the past twenty-five years has been done in playhouses serving a most limited public. The new stagecraft and the imaginative play have found their first adherents among the aristocracy of intellect and breeding, perhaps the most snobbish aristocracy that we have yet developed. The relation of this class to the realistic play is as clear and as simple as the relation of the future democracy is likely to be to the drama of social photography.

When some one writes the dramatic history of the past seventy-five years—Realism; Its Cause and Cure —he will find, I think, one reason for its coming and two for its going, bound up together in the single complex of industrial capitalism. Realism was the natural product of slavery to machines. It was both an evidence of how our minds were cramped by the hideous conditions of life and of how desperately they sought for some end to their slavery. We could see no farther than our miseries, but at least we would seek

a cure. Accordingly we began a photographic study of capitalistic society, mingled with propagandist efforts to end its more flaming pieces of injustice.

The playgoer tired of realism for two reasons, or rather some tired of it for one reason and some for another. Even before the ghastly and gigantic folly of the war, there were those who were willing to give the whole thing up as a bad job and seek peace or distraction in an art divorced as far as possible from the surface of life about them. The desperate disillusionment of the war multiplied this audience tenfold and brought to it also men and women seeking new excitements and sensations as great as those they had passed through. This made a body of playgoers largely lacking in faith and devotion, but at least freed from the obsessions of realism. In addition to these, who were ready for a message of beauty, imagination, even austerity and truth, there was a more active group who had sought deliberately for something beyond or apart from the literalness of life. These men and women were a product of industrialism. They were members of a leisure class which it had created, a leisure class freed both from the absorption of money-getting and from the greater absorption of the search for the means of escaping the evils of money-getting. It was this class that supplied the sinews of the new art of the theatre.

When, and if, revolution comes, I cannot see how

realism can avoid losing its remaining adherents. Revolution will bring no end to human problems, but the problems are likely to be more spiritual than physical. There will certainly be less room for the propagandist, the muckraker, the social healer. We shall still want to study the life of man, for that is the whole source of drama. But this life will be far less a matter of surface relationships than it is today. The future Gorky, for example, will not have to dig in the muck of the lower depths to find the soul of truth in mankind.

Yet—revolution or no revolution—the great theatre should go on. It may, of course, suffer corruption. It may become the Roman Coliseum of an imperialism that debases man even while it nourishes him. In great cities, like New York, the theatre may continue as it promises to develop—a beautiful and effective institution permanently and efficiently organized on commercial and quasi-educational lines—while at the same time, in St. Louis as well as New York, there will gradually spring up festival theatres in which the finest creative spirit of the community, exemplified in playwrights, artists and actors, will labor. Under industrial imperialism or under revolutionary democracy such festival theatres, sheltered in exposition buildings or in natural valleys, may achieve as clear an expression of the spirit of democracy as they ever could under revolution. The festival theatre of the group-being, of the people made visible and articulate,

may come in answer to revolution and as part of it. It may come as the expression of a democracy thwarted in outward form. Or it may come as the expression of a democracy which can never exist under the machinery of government and commerce, but which will flame out through communal art.

The business of writing of the theatre of tomorrow seems presumptuous, risky and absurd enough as I look at it in retrospect. To write of the theatre of revolution and of life made whole, brings me up sharp against the sense of the dangers of apocalyptic fervors. Yet it is impossible to deny a faith in the City of God. There were once, you know, the Greeks.

A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX

FOLLOWING the excellent fashion set by Sheldon Cheney in his *Art Theatre,* I am offering a discursive and selected bibliography rather than as complete a list as possible of all the available material on the subject covered by *The Theatre of Tomorrow.* An unusually complete bibliography of the art of the theatre up to 1916—the only one of which I have any knowledge—will be found in *Community Drama and Pageantry* (1916) by Mary Porter Beegle and Jack Crawford. Here I shall give only the names of volumes which have been of direct service in the writing of this book and from which more can be gained by the interested reader than I could include within its scope.

Two special bibliographical works have proved of great aid, both by W. B. Gamble, head of the technology division of the New York Public Library. One, *Stage Scenery* (1917) is an index of 2,125 items dealing with illustrations of stage designs, settings and costumes that have appeared since 1900 in books and magazines on file at the New York Public Library. The other, *The Development of Scenic Art and Stage*

Machinery (1920), lists almost as many references to books and articles dealing with many phases of production.

At the head of the general works on the new movement in the theatre must be placed Hiram Kelly Moderwell's pioneer volume, *The Theatre of Today* (1914), to which my own book is frankly a sequel. Huntley Carter's *New Spirit in Drama and Art* (1912) is more discursive and less well-organized, but contains much information of value. Sheldon Cheney's two volumes, *The New Movement in the Theatre* (1914) and *The Art Theatre* (1917), convey much excellent theory as well as fact; the latter contains material on the organization of the sort of repertory theatre which is essential to the complete realization of the ideas on modern production to be found in all these books. Cheney's *Open Air Theatre* supplies full information on a subject of which I have found it impossible to say much. *L'Art théâtral moderne* (1910), by Jacques Rouché, founder of the Théâtre des Arts and now director of the Paris Opera, contains, in addition to studies of the most important figures and theories of the new movement, valuable reproductions in color of the sketches for *The Blue Bird* at the Moscow Art Theatre, placed in comparison with the English production.

The five volumes of *The Theatre Arts Magazine* (1917-21) are a source-book of more material upon

various aspects of the subject in hand than is to be found collected elsewhere. The file of *Theatre-Craft,* an English periodical, contains many illustrations of English work. Special topics have brought forward many books of interest and help. On Max Reinhardt, for example, there are the following: *The Theatre of Max Reinhardt* (1914), by Huntley Carter; *Max Reinhardt* (1910), by Siegfried Jacobsohn; *Max Reinhardt* (1915), by Heinz Herald; and *Reinhardt und Seine Bühne* (1920), by Heinz Herald and Ernst Stern, a particularly interesting volume because of its many colored illustrations. The Russian theatre, and particularly the theories of Stanislavsky, Meyerhold and Yevreynoff, may be glimpsed in *The Russian Theatre under the Revolution* (1920), Oliver M. Sayler's excellent and suggestive report, and in *The Path of the Modern Russian Stage* (1918) by Alexander Bakshy.

Of the theorists and artist-critics of the newer theatre, the most important for the English reader is, of course, Gordon Craig, whose three books, *On the Art of the Theatre* (1911), *Towards a New Theatre* (1913) and *The Theatre—Advancing* (1919) and whose magazine, *The Mask,* stand out above all other contributions on the subject. Adolphe Appia's *Die Musik und die Inscenierung* (1899) is most difficult reading in the original and has not, unfortunately, been translated. Among other volumes of theory in

German must be mentioned Georg Fuchs's *Die Revolution des Theaters* (1909) and Carl Hagemann's *Moderne Bühnenkunst* (1916-18).

In the field of historical studies of the physical theatre, a field poorly covered in English, I have found assistance in Karl Mantzius's *History of Theatrical Art in Ancient and Modern Times* (1903-09); Martin Hammitzsch's *Der Moderne Theaterbau* (1906); Edward Moritz's *Das Antike Theater und die Modernen Reformbestrebingen in Theaterbau* (1910) a particularly useful volume; the monographs on his various theatres written by Max Littmann; the third chapter of Brander Matthews' *A Study of the Drama* (1910); Ashley H. Thorndike's *Shakespeare's Theatre* (1916); William John Lawrence's *Elizabethan Playhouse and Other Studies* (1912-13); Winifred Smith's *Commedia dell' Arte* (1912); A. Haigh's *Attic Theatre* (1907); E. R. Fiechter's *Die Baugeschichtliche Entwicklung des Antiken Theaters* (1914); *Architekt Ferdinand Fellner und seine Bedeutung für den modernen Theaterbau* (1910); Irving Pichel's *On Building a Theatre* (1920); A. Streit's *Das Theater* (1903); E. O. Sachs's *Modern Opera Houses and Theatres* (1896-98); R. C. Flickinger's *Greek Theatre and Its Drama* (1918); and an unpublished monograph, *The Theatre of Tradition,* by A. E. Krows, whose *Play Production in America* (1916) furnishes information on the technical progress of our stage.

Among books on miscellaneous topics I must list *The Art of the Vieux Colombier* (1918), by Waldo Frank; issues of Wasmuth's *Monatshefte für Baukunst,* descriptive of the Grosses Schauspielhaus (Jahrgang V, Heft 1/2) and of the Salzburg Festspielhaus (Jahrgang V, Heft 9/10); *Decoration in the Theatre* (1919) by Albert Rutherston, which is No. 2 of Vol. I of *The Monthly Chapbook; Über Bühne und Bildende Kunst* (1912), by Max Krüger; *Das Grosse Schauspielhaus* (1920); the London *Stage Year Book* (1908-21), a treasury of many interesting reproductions of scenes from German productions and of sketches; the files of *Le Comœdia Illustré,* for reproductions in color of work of the Russian and French stage artists.

In addition to credit given elsewhere for plates or photographs loaned for reproduction, I wish to acknowledge the use of two charming drawings by Fauconnet of an Elizabethan theatre and of the Vieux Colombier's stage in New York, reproduced from *Album du Vieux Colombier;* the silhouette of Reinhardt at rehearsal from *Das Loch im Vorhang,* by Lotti Reiniger; drawings made especially for this book by Robert Edmond Jones, Norman-Bel Geddes, and Sheldon K. Vielé; the generous photographic assistance of Francis Bruguière; the loan by Oliver M. Sayler of the photographs of the soldiers in the

Kamerny production of *Salome* and of the Appia setting for *L'Annonce faite à Marie* at Hellerau; and the critical advice and correction of manuscript and proof by Robert E. Jones, Oliver M. Sayler, Sheldon Cheney, Horace Liveright, Irving Pichel and my wife.

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